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# Grass Roots

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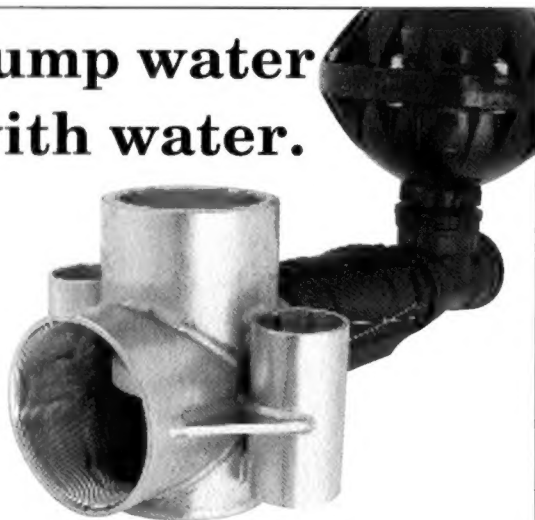
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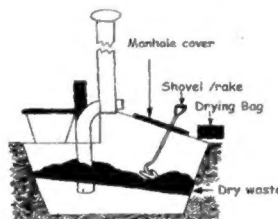
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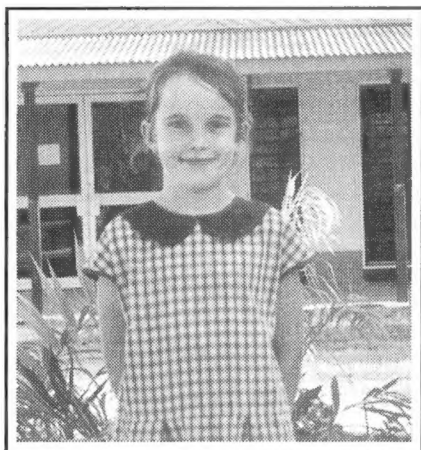
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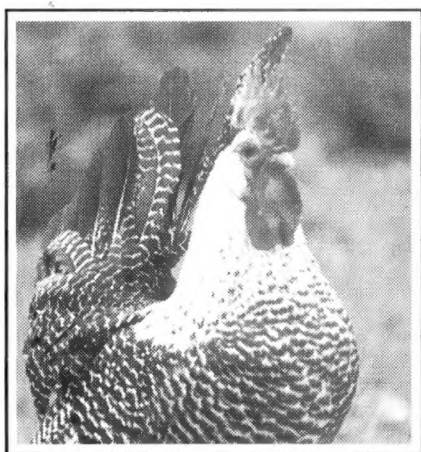
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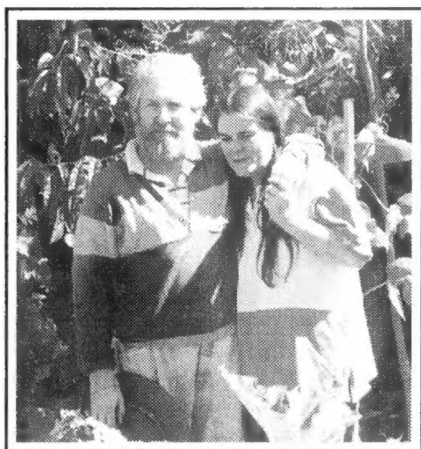
# Welcome to *Grass Roots* magazine



*Sarah's great enviro garden, page 47.*



*Stylish breeds for egg lay, page 62.*



*We're really moving, page 16.*

## PEOPLE

**Bush Food Pioneers**  
*Exciting opportunities*

**The Big Move**  
*Tassie, here we come*

**Going Bush, Staying Sane**  
*Plan for lifestyle change*

**I Wish Someone Had Told Me About Visitors**  
*Unwelcome country callers*

**A Rare Breed Of Retiree**  
*Resourceful GR couple*

David Miller 6

Sherrian O'Connor 16

Jan Farrar 33

Dianne Warren 54

Shirley & Jim Mayfield 57

## FARMSTOCK

**Novel Lawn Mowers**  
*Guineas in the garden*

**Heritage Sheep Breeds, The Ryeland**  
*For meatiest hindquarters*

**Economical Laying Breeds**  
*Pretty good egg producers*

Beth Montgomery 19

Megg Miller 31

Megg Miller 62

## GARDEN

**Wise Garden Watering**  
*Conserving a precious resource*

**Every Drop On The Crop**  
*Recycled waterers*

**Making Seed-Raising Mixture At Home**  
*Self-sufficient propagation*

**The Key To Mandala Gardening**  
*Permaculture growing technique*

**No Matter How Big Or Small You Are**  
*NT young gardeners*

**Planting Pointers**  
*Top gardening tips*

Mary Horsfall 11

Alan Stewart 13

Nevin Sweeney 24

Dorothy Creevey 29

Sarah Francis 47

John Mount 56

## OWNER BUILDER

**Outback Green House**  
*Low-impact living*

Gwen Leane 9

## ENVIRONMENT

**Drought Relief For Wildlife**  
*Care for starving animals*

**Managing The Mozzie Menace**  
*Keep the buzzers at bay*

**Greywater And The Regulators**  
*Unravelling the bureaucratic tangle*

Neville Jackson 15

Heather Powell 21

Sally Carr 48

## CRAFT

**Puffer Quilt**  
*Warm and colourful gift*

**A Chain Of Beads Plant**  
*Make a crafty imitation*

**Under The Shade Of The Old Clothes Hoist**  
*Versatile shelter*

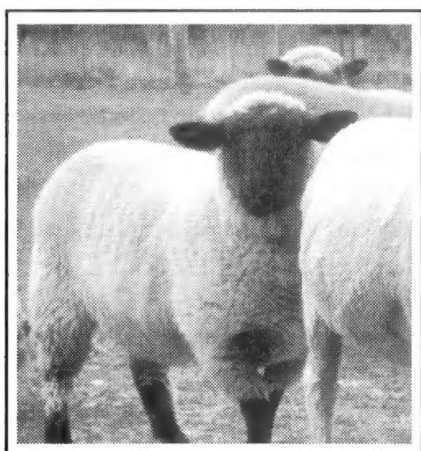
M Ross 12

Robyn Leah 18

Jose Robinson 53



Make an easy scarecrow, page 14.



Drought feed tips for ewe, page 69.



## HEALTH

### Sprouts For Health

*Tasty, nutritious and cheap*

### Healing Herbs

*Remedies from bygone days*

## PRACTICAL DIY

### Recycling Runs Riot, Scarecrows

*Garden guard or house companion*

### 'C' For Chooks

*Novel tyre reuse*

### Step Up In Stile

*Rustic fence crossing*

### Roberino's Water-Saving Hints

*Find a system to suit*

### Greywater For The Garden

*A practical setup*

## FOOD

### Juicy Leftovers

*Economical eats*

### Brew Up A Scrumpy

*Simple apple cider*

### The Carrot Slow Cooker Cake

*Easy-peasy treat*

### Weed Cuisine

*Food from 'pest' plants*

## ON THE LAND

### Options For Drought Feeding

*Emergency rations for cattle*

### A Rainforest Giant

*Outstanding bunya nut*

### Feeding Farm Pets During Drought

*Keep the flock healthy*

## REGULARS

### Gumnut Gossip

*Livestock Health & Management*

### Eco News

*Feedback Link-up Feedback*

### Kids Page

*In The Kitchen*

*What's On*

*Round The Market Place*

*Recent Releases*

*Down Home on the Farm*

*Penpals*

*Grassifieds*

## COVER PHOTOS

**Front Cover:** Ian and Juleigh Robins promote the exciting potential of bush food. Read their advice for new producers on page 6. Photo by Marcel Aucar.

**Back Cover:** The wide brown land has its own stark beauty, despite the drought. Find advice for feeding livestock on pages 55 & 69, and some great watering tips on pages 11, 13, 65 & 67.

Edited by Megg Miller and Mary Horsfall.

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Pauline Kenyon 61

Denise Horrigan 71

Roberino 14

Warwick Rowell 27

Neville Jackson 59

Roberino 65

Robert Millet 67

Lin Foley 8

Anthony Thorogood 22

Cassandra Turnbull 26

Gael Murray 51

June Birkett 55

Jose Robinson 66

Jack Miles 69

Megg Miller 5

35

36

37

49

50

64

73

74

75

76

77

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## GUMNUT GOSSIP

by Megg Miller.

Thank you everyone for well wishes at Christmas time; it's nice to know we're in so many people's thoughts. We were fortunate too that the way Christmas and New Year fell we could have time off to rest and recover from the busy weeks of December and garner energy for the challenges in 2003. Having a magazine going to the printers in the second week of January makes the return to work far from easy. Not only is it hard adapting to the 9 to 5 routine, but files invariably manage to hide themselves, photos disappear and we wander around asking if anyone's seen a mango recipe, the pink file, or even the precious magazine mock-up.

It's truly been bedlam. The phones rang constantly, more visitors called in eight days than we'd see in two months, a radio station called to organise a live interview and an ad agency rang requesting six geese for an upcoming job and could they call and photograph them, the date suggested being the very day we go to print. If all this didn't generate twitching and shallow breathing, Suni rang in to say she and Marcie had been robbed, and a day or so previously Sally had put in her resignation. Believe it or not we've managed to cheerfully solve a few problems, put others in the too-hard file for later and execute the finishing touches to the magazine. Of course, there is a strong possibility we've mislabeled a sheep as a cow or attributed an article to someone other than the correct author, but overall we can promise you a good read.

We have to apologise to Bob Rankin who wrote the small piece last issue on the need to be ruthless when gardening. Somehow we attributed the article to Robert Millet on the contents page, so apologies to Bob and also Robert.

We'll miss Sally; she's been with us for a number of years and has been an integral part of the GR team. If we wanted a short piece to complement an article or fill a space Sally could always come up with something inter-

esting and informative. Her love of good food and cooking has been reflected in the choice of recipes for 'In the Kitchen' and we've been able to rely on her contributing something wonderful tasting but unusual to our special office luncheons. We'll be lamenting her absence and muttering, 'Well, Sally would have known', for months to come, whether we're looking at *Grass Roots* or wondering which movie would be good to see or where we should eat multicultural food in Melbourne. We wish her happy and rewarding times ahead on her path to new directions.

Two notes from occasional contributors stood out from the busy Christmas mail, and we thought you would like to read them also. June Birkett is no stranger to readers and has a piece this issue on alternatives for feeding dairy cows in the drought. If you feel miffed by water restrictions or think you're doing it hard, consider June's circumstances. They're probably representative of many other farmers. 'We've no ground water, no feed and only one week of silage bales left. We're so tired of carrying water everywhere. Our bobby calves are selling for \$2 a head and there's still a bill to pay for cartage and costs . . . Personal water must be boiled – septic tanks are going into the creeks where our water comes from and we've been getting sick. Conditions keep deteriorating and going past anything you could imagine, but with the way cities are under threat with terrorism I'm glad to be on the land with all its problems. We hope a good monsoon will come down. Wishing everyone a better year to come.' June, our thoughts are with you and fellow farmers and we're hoping the monsoon arrives sooner rather than later.

Our second correspondent was Charles Eadon-Clarke who described his friend Sam's water saving system last issue. Charles was tickled pink to be published and mentioned that Sam had received much positive feedback and interest in his system. Charles is

nearly 86 years old – but being an octogenarian is no barrier to the projects he is working on, in particular an inexpensive high security dwelling ideal for the elderly, holiday homes, shearers' quarters and the like. If we weren't taken aback by this, a read of Charles' CV left us speechless. He has a range of historical profiles on famous and infamous Australians on tape, worked in film when young, saw active service in Palestine and the Far East, travelled extensively in WA as a field officer, and holds a number of honorary titles in recognition of service given to organisations in WA. Phew, that's only half of it too. Clearly Charles is an example of the old maxim, ask a busy person . . .

June, Charles, Bob and Robert, we think you're fantastic. *Grass Roots* is so hard to put down because the stories and letters and articles are interesting and inspiring. And who wants to read about Hollywood when you can lose yourself in GR? We look forward to sharing June's joy when rain falls and hearing from Charles and all our other contributors in 2003. Maybe we'll hear from you too. ☘



A candid moment in the office: We will miss Sally (left) who has been a terrific colleague and friend. I wonder if her next workplace will also be periodically populated with free-ranging goslings?

# BUSH FOOD PIONEERS

by David Miller, Yea, Vic.

**Even though the bush food industry has been going for some years, there is still plenty of opportunity for those seeking a unique business project for a rural property. Bush food pioneers, Ian and Juleigh Robins, have some invaluable advice for anyone interested in this exciting, enviro-friendly industry.**

Ian and Juleigh Robins were chefs who became interested in creating a greater awareness of Australian native foods by incorporating them in mainstream Australian food products. They started their business, Robins Foods, in 1988, and now have a range of marvelously tasty and innovative jams, sauces and dressings with names like Wild Rosella Jam, Lemon Aspen and Raspberry Relish, Wild Lime and Brandy Marmalade, Wild Pepper BBQ Sauce, Hot Tropics Curry Sauce and Green Devil Wasabi Sauce. With Coles Supermarkets stocking these exciting products in Australia, and supermarket chains overseas doing likewise, the industry certainly looks healthy.

## GETTING STARTED

Ian and Juleigh have a few practical suggestions for potential producers. The first priority is to undertake patient research and perhaps trial different species to find what is suitable for a particular site.

An important early step is to contact a distributor to get an idea of what the market currently demands, and what trends they perceive as important. Producing something that is in demand, or potentially will be when plants are bearing, is crucial to success. There is nothing worse than the trials of producing something that in the end, you cannot sell, and you cannot keep.

The Internet is often an easy place to start looking for local producer groups. If you don't have an Internet connection, chances are the local library is connected, and staff will be happy to assist you with your project. Members of producer groups will have vital local experience of climate and soils, and specific details of how different species



A range of sauces (above), chutneys (below) and other products made from bush foods is available at Coles Myer stores – a large Australian company supporting local industry.



perform. Don't forget the Australian native food industry is the only agriculture that is ideal for this country, and it has been going for centuries!

Local experience saves years of effort and can get you on track quickly. In new industries, successes and failures, mistakes and innovations are often not recorded, so contact with other growers is vital. With advice, a trial crop is recommended, either in an experimental plot or by planting perennial fruiting species as alternative windbreaks. This is a first practical step in gaining experience to be used in eventually choosing the crop or combination of species to be planted. In the process comes an understanding of soils and weather patterns, expertise in propagation, a knowledge of reliable suppliers of planting material, and the level of local demand from sales at produce markets or to the nearest distributor or processor.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING

Ian and Juleigh love the native food business because it is so good for the environment. Farming bush foods avoids all the mainstream problems of farming, like having to use sprays and fertilisers, because you are really farming your own native microclimate with local species. They often organise workshops for those looking for alternatives, in conjunction with state agricultural departments, and agree that now is the time to think seriously about entering the industry. This is because of the initiative of the Coles Myer company and the interest its executives have shown in helping Aboriginal communities. The company and the industry has established a trust fund to help native communities interested in running bush food businesses. Funds for their assistance come from levies on sales of bush food products, so not only does Coles stock and promote the products, the





Ian and Juleigh, both chefs, are enthusiastic consumers of native food products and devote much time to promoting them.

whole industry pays levies to the fund of anything they sell. A supply company has been set up for all producers, which now supplies Robins Foods. This development, plus the steady demand

from exports, should significantly lift the momentum of the industry, and increase the demand for produce.

#### TASTE TEST

Perhaps the best place to start, when researching bush foods, is the supermarket. What is for sale? What does it taste like? How readily will it be accepted here and overseas? Perhaps, under our very eyes, is a food industry with a unique and attractive flavour profile which truly reflects Australia, and which can be produced without degrading the environment in which it is produced. 🌿



A levy on bush food products helps raise money to further develop the industry.

#### RESOURCES

I have avoided listing the different species of native foods because they vary in their soil and climate needs. The best resources are the suppliers who will know the groups and individuals in your area because they are purchasing their products.

Juleigh and Ian Robins  
Robins Foods  
Factory 1  
8 Braeside Drive  
Braeside Vic 3195  
Ph: 03-9587-8820

The Robins are responsible for two books published by Allen and Unwin. They are:

*Wild Lime* – A handy introduction manual to bush food, which includes recipes and even how to grow some species in the backyard.

*Wild Classic* – A book of recipes featuring bush food ingredients.

Queensland Bushfood Cooperative  
C/- John King  
Ph: 07-5494-3812

Cherikoff Pty Ltd  
Vic Cherikoff  
PO Box 2103  
Boronia Park NSW 2111  
Ph: 02-9818-2800

Cherikoff has published *The Bushfood Handbook* – A guide to gathering, growing, processing and cooking Australian wild foods.

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Coles Myer stock many bush foods and sometimes have books as well.

Local agriculture offices and the agriculture or botany schools at universities are often worth contacting as they may have access to relevant information on local species from student researchers or farmers conducting trials. 🌿

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# JUICY LEFTOVERS

by Lin Foley, Mylneford, NSW.

Determined to become healthier, I recently bought a manual stainless steel juicer and made some delicious fruit and vegetable juices. I soon started to feel the health benefits the juices gave me and I decided to juice more often. There was, however, one thing I did not feel so good about. Every time I juiced a glassful of goodies, I ended up throwing away large amounts of fruit or vegetable pulp. Determined not to let it stop me from making the wonderful juices, I started to use the pulp in various recipes.

The following recipes have been made using my trusty manual stainless steel juicer. Most centrifugal juicers will make pulp that is moist enough to be used in the same recipes. Be aware that the top of the range electrical masticating juicers may produce pulp that is a bit too dry for some of the recipes. However, you could experiment by adding a little bit of liquid to remoisten the pulp.

After juicing, I keep the pulp fresh by placing it in an airtight plastic container in the refrigerator until I am ready to use it.

## USING THE PULP

### Carrot

I juice a lot of carrots and therefore end up with large quantities of carrot pulp. I found the best way of making use of the vast amount of pulp is by adding it



to mashed potato. The kids love it with melted cheese and a splash of tomato sauce on top. I also mix it with cooked mince in shepherd's pie.

### Tomato

Tomato pulp is very useful in any dish requiring tomato products. I add it while making spaghetti sauce or tomato soup. Tomato pulp is also delicious added to baked beans or other pulse dishes. I just mix it together and heat it gently for a few minutes until the beans are warm. I serve it with a sprinkle of some grated cheese and chopped garlic chives.

### Cucumber

Cucumber pulp stays quite moist, making it very suitable to add to rice

salads and tabouli dishes. I also use it to make a delicious dip. I add a few tablespoons of pulp to light cream cheese, cottage cheese, ricotta, or sour cream. Just before serving I like to sprinkle a little bit of freshly ground pepper on top.

### Beetroot

Beetroot pulp tends to be a bit drier than cucumber pulp. I use it sparingly in rice salads and tabouli dishes. It provides some great colour contrast

### Apple

Apple pulp browns quickly. If I do not use it straight away, I add lemon juice and place it in an airtight container in the fridge. I mainly use the pulp in apple pies. The pulp is a bit too dry to use it as a sole replacement for the apple needed in the recipe, but it will reduce the amount of apple needed. I also add it to yoghurt or ice cream.

### Miscellaneous

Of course there are some pulps that are difficult to reuse. Celery pulp and pulp containing garlic or ginger skins are too fibrous. Our chooks love this pulp and it makes a healthy addition to their diet. Garlic is said to keep worms at bay. I also add it to my worm farm and the earthworms love it. Any excess I bury in the compost heap.

As you can see, pulp need not go to waste. I am sure you can find a lot more uses. Have fun!

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# OUTBACK GREEN HOUSE

by Gwen Leane, Port Augusta, SA.

**Grass Roots people are fantastic. They continually amaze us with their resourcefulness and commitment to self-sufficiency and the environment. And, location is no deterrent. Even in an isolated mining town in the harsh inland people are living their ideals, and encouraging others to do the same. Be inspired.**



The Green House is not a green painted house, it is one that has been designed to be economically and environmentally friendly and adaptable to the climate of the outback. The Green House is located in Roxby Downs, South Australia, approximately 600 kilometres north of Adelaide. It was built in 1998 for the Western Mining Company Environment Section in consultation with Michael and Patricia Evans. They were keen to prove that it is possible to have an environmentally friendly family home without significant changes to the lifestyle. At first glance the house appears to be like every other house in the street, but a closer inspection reveals there are some very significant differences.

Roxby Downs is an isolated mining town in a remote area where water and energy are at a minimum, having to be imported overland. Therefore, the house is constructed to minimise the use of power and water. Visitors are encouraged to visit the house by appointment, encouraging towns and individuals to consider building clean and green houses that will save energy and reduce environmental impact. Features of the house are solar power, natural heating and lighting, water- and energy-efficient appliances.

The house was orientated to retain existing vegetation and for effective use of passive heating and cooling. The bedrooms are situated on the south side, facing away from the sun, while

the living areas have a northerly outlook. Western walls are windowless because they catch the full blast of afternoon sun. Vegetation is planted for shade along this side.

Wool insulation was chosen because it is a natural product made from waste wool which is usually dumped in landfill. This type of insulation is very effective, noise proof, fire retardant, and helps the pastoral industry as well. 'It is like wrapping a house in a protective blanket,' says Trish. She further explains that house insulation is an investment which will pay for itself in three to five years in reduced energy bills. Appropriate insulation should be an integral part of every house. The house features a roof ventilator and Winterlite verandahs three metres wide to allow winter sun through the large windows in winter and produce shade in summer. The ceiling height of 2.7 metres allows fans to be installed in every room to increase air flow throughout the house. Wood obtained from the local recycling depot is used in the slow combustion wood heater during the short winter period.

During construction the house was plumbed so that greywater could be separated from toilet waste and treated on site to be safely reused for garden irrigation and possibly even toilet flushing.

The very limited rainfall of the area (160 mm/year) means that omitting guttering is an accepted way of lower-

ing house building costs in Roxby Downs. Mike and Trish have opted to install guttering and tanks to harvest what rain does fall. Enough water is harvested for the house to operate for part of the year, reducing the consumption of desalinated mains supply. From a 25-millimetre shower or storm, they harvest 4000 litres.

## **HARNESSING THE SUN**

Twenty-year-old solar panels supplying 480 watts were salvaged and mounted on the north-facing roof for maximum heat collection. The system is coupled to a grid-interactive inverter, supplying approximately a quarter of the power needs of the family. Additional panels, increasing the power to 1500 watts, and an inverter have been connected. The additions were jointly funded by the Evans family and the Federal Government's photovoltaic grant program.

When power usage in the house is low, the excess power produced flows into the grid and Trish and Mike receive payment from the municipality of Roxby Downs. Monitoring the power production on a daily basis provides helpful data, keeps track of excessive power usage and allows problems to be discovered and solved quickly. The data gathered to date has shown a higher production of energy than the projected first estimates.

A solar tube is used as a skylight to provide free natural light in a window-

less toilet during the day, thus saving power. Skylights are an excellent solution to dark areas of the house. Placing windows to catch light and winter sunshine can provide natural heat. Thought must also be given to their placement so that full summer heat is avoided.

Clothes are dried on a clothesline rather than in a drier. Sunlight is a natural and effective disinfectant.

Hot water is produced in a Solarhart gas-boosted solar hot water service mounted on the roof. Gas is cheaper and more energy efficient than are most solar electrical boosters. The booster is manually controlled and is only used when additional hot water is needed. Because of excessive sunlight the booster is not switched on sometimes until May.

Trish and Mike point out that installation costs can be higher than in less environmentally friendly alternatives, but that long-term savings are significant to their pocket and the environment. The reduction of harmful greenhouse gases by using renewable energy sources and appliances is also a huge benefit.

#### APPLIANCES

Trish and Mike have given a great deal of thought to the purchasing of appliances. At the time of purchase, a Dishlex Global 500 was found to be the most water efficient Australian made dishwasher, using only 19.6 litres of water for a complete cycle. It is operated only when fully loaded. The washing machine is a GE front-loading appliance. Front-loading units are more water, energy, and soap powder efficient than top-loading machines.



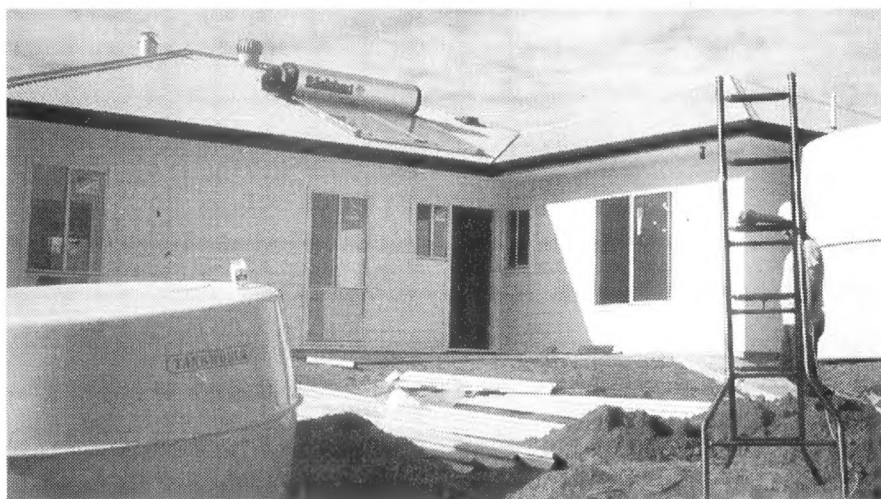
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Above: The Green House before the garden grew; see previous page for the developed garden.  
 Below: A gas-boosted solar hot water service and rainwater tanks are just two of the environmentally friendly features.



An evaporative air conditioner is installed. However, house orientation, insulation and overhead fans ensure that even in the heat of summer, the conditioner is used only in late afternoon or during a heat wave.

#### THE FOUR Rs

Trish and Mike live by the 'four Rs': refuse (eg excess packaging), reduce, reuse, recycle. There is a waste management recycling service centre in Roxby Downs to which bottles and cans can be taken. Trish and Mike bundle up cardboard and newspapers and take them to the recycling centre. Garden cuttings are shredded and recycled as mulch in the garden to conserve water. Compost is produced from organic garden waste, with animal manures used to improve soil for fruit and vegetable growing. Chooks are

kept as recyclers of household scraps, for pest control, as ground aerators and fertilisers, as well as food producers in the form of eggs.

The Evans family has been innovative in reusing plastic containers as letterboxes, birdbaths and plant holders. Old wooden railway sleepers were used as a retaining wall in the garden. Verandah flooring and the barbecue surrounds have been built from recycled timber. An internal wall in the games room features jarrah panelling that was formerly floorboards in the burnt-out Roxby Downs youth hall and before that flooring from a hall in a neighbouring town. Recycled timbers were used in the construction of the games room and verandah. Mike believes that when people begin to refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle there will be a reduction in landfill and less stress on the environment. ♻



# Wise Garden Watering

by Mary Horsfall, Euroa, Vic.

Up to 50 percent of a household's water use goes onto the garden; typically, this can amount to about 150,000 litres per year. There is huge potential here for significant savings to our pockets, to municipal water supplies, and, ultimately, to the environment.

## FOOD PLANTS

In some areas it can be necessary to restrict the vegie garden, or even miss a season, during drought years. If you do need to make choices, these pointers will help.

- Don't try to establish new fruit trees during dry years.

- Thoroughly mulch established fruit trees and make every attempt to keep the root zone damp and give them a good drink once a week. Drippers and soaker hoses are efficient watering choices. Most fruit trees also respond well to greywater.

- Avoid trying to grow vegies that need a continuous supply of water such as celery, cauliflower, lettuce, spinach, Chinese cabbage, marrows.

- Hardy vegies and herbs include both globe and Jerusalem artichokes, root crops, cherry tomatoes, warrigal spinach, garlic and chives, marjoram, rosemary and lemon balm.

- Broccoli, Brussels sprouts and kale need less water if planted at wide spacings.

- Overwatering onions can delay maturity and reduce keeping quality.

- Don't water peas and beans after planting seeds unless the ground is very dry. Too much water in the early stages can produce lush growth and delay cropping. Productivity will increase with watering once plants begin flowering and pods are setting.

- Once tomatoes are established restrict watering until flowers form. Less water will reduce size and number of fruit but they will be tastier. Once fruit set do not allow soil to dry out.

## LAWNS

Most water used in the garden goes

onto the lawn.

- Reduce lawn area; plant hardy ground cover plants or shrubs, but not during the drought – plan to do it when the weather breaks.

- Plant native grasses or other drought-resistant varieties such as 'Arid Smartgrass' and 'Dawson Creeping Bluegrass'.

- Avoid trying to establish a new lawn during the height of summer, or at all during drought years.

- If you must establish a lawn in hot weather, turf rolls offer the most water-efficient method.

- Leave cut grass on the lawn as mulch.

- Do not cut grass too low. Only about a third of the leaf should be cut.

- Before growing a lawn add organic matter to the soil and scatter rotted manure or compost to fertilise and improve soil water retention.\*

- Aerate lawns to encourage water penetration and prevent runoff.

- Water a little more deeply than the root zone to encourage longer root growth.

- Avoid frequent light waterings, twice a week, as above, should be enough in most conditions.

- Avoid use of sprinklers that throw water high in the air and/or in a fine mist.\*

- Water in the early mornings or late afternoon – early evening.\*

- Try to match the water spray to the shape of the lawn.\*

## IN THE GARDEN GENERALLY

The asterisked points under the 'Lawns' heading apply also to any areas of the garden.

- Mulch, mulch, mulch. Not only during droughts, but always. It will help aerate soil, add organic matter, insulate soil and reduce evaporation by up to 80 percent.

- Plant succulents in dry, hot areas.

- Collect information about hardy low-water plants that will survive in your area. Ask neighbours, garden

clubs, environment groups; walk around and look over fences. Usually native and indigenous plants are survivors, but some of these 'survive' by actually setting seed and dying.

- Use a watering system appropriate to the sort of garden. Drippers are good for individual plants but microspray systems are more suitable for garden beds. Soaker hoses are good to use under the mulch, especially when plants are roughly in rows.

- Reuse greywater from the house wherever you can, but check your council's regulations before making changes to a plumbing system. Do not spray greywater over vegies or use it on root crops because of potential pathogens.

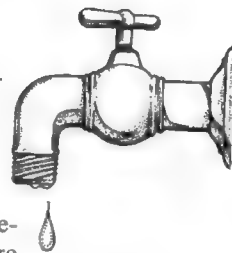
- Group together plants with similar water needs. Plant those that need most water closest to the house and where they will be shaded for part of the day. Hardier species can be planted further away and in more exposed sites.

- Avoid using sprinklers when it is windy, but if plants are stressed water by hand so you can direct the stream where it is needed rather than have it blown away.

- If using an automatic watering system, install an override device to prevent it coming on when there actually is some rain.

## GREYWATER AND SOIL pH

Most laundry powders are alkaline, so greywater containing them should not be used on acid-loving plants. A mixture of wash and rinse water is better than just wash water. Alternate areas receiving greywater to prevent excess alkalinity. Tests done several years ago found OMO Micro Concentrate and Ark Concentrate to be the best (of those tested) for garden reuse, while Surf Laundry Powder and Cold Power were not recommended. ♻



# PUFFER QUILT

## A Satin Patchwork Cot Quilt

by M Ross, Umina, NSW.

I began making puffer quilts for grandchildren and friends as a way of using up scraps of nursery print satin. They are light, warm and comfortable as a cot quilt and also for baby to lie on when on the floor. Any fabric scraps can be used, however. They are economical to make using only \$10 worth of quilt filling.

You can wash the quilt on gentle cycle using wool wash. It will dry well on a sunny day. The puffs fluff up again and look like new.

Be sure to ask for low-allergy quilt filling for a baby.

### HOW TO MAKE

#### Materials

40 satin squares 23 x 23 cm in assorted colours and patterns

40 colourfast cotton squares 18 x 18 cm

light and washable quilt filling, 4 x 800 grams bags

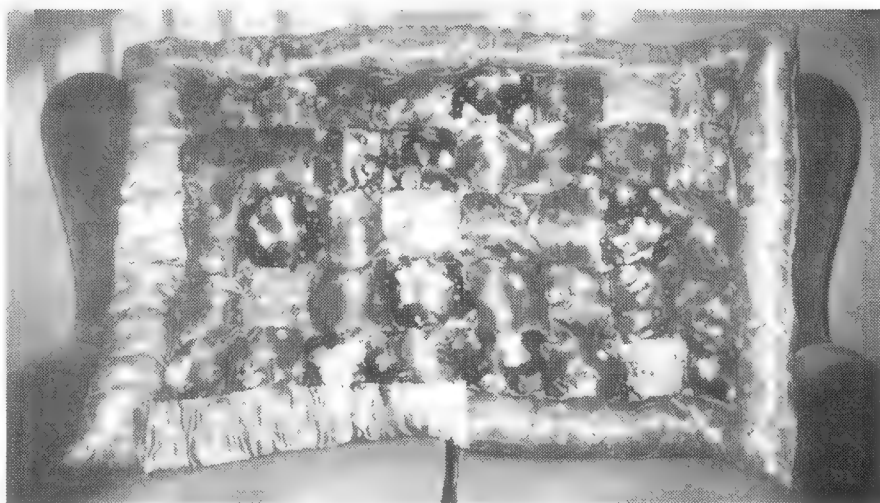
satin borders 18 x 160 cm and 18 x 112 cm

I used a piece of satin 2 metres x 2 metres for border and back of quilt.

Finished quilt should be approximately 108 cm across and 156 cm in length (4 cm used in seam allowance).

#### Method

- To make puffed squares gather the edges of each satin square and pin and



The multi coloured front of the puffer quilt (above) and the plain back (below).

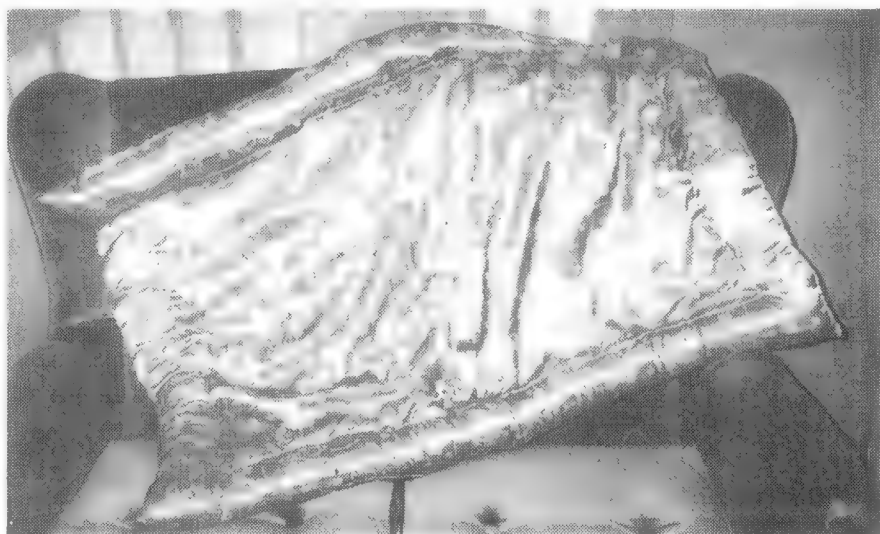
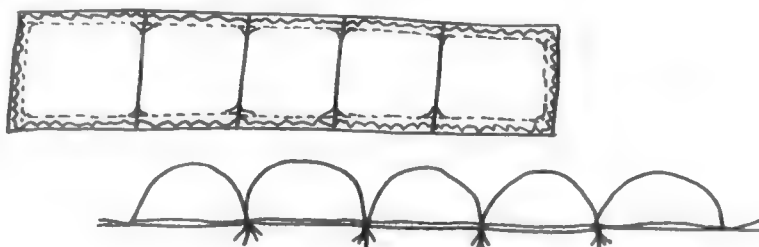
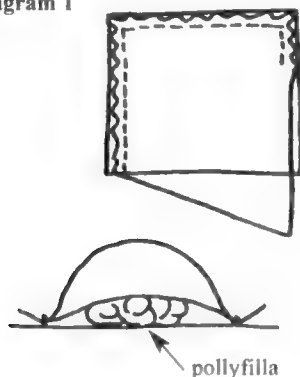


Diagram 2

Diagram 1





sew one centimetre in from the edge onto a cotton square with right sides out, leaving a small gap for insertion of filling. Don't turn inside out. Fill square with quilt filling until it puffs up and sew up gap. Continue with the remaining pieces of satin and cotton to create 40 individual puffed squares (diagram 1).

- Sew along the seam allowance to join together eight puffed squares to form a long row. Repeat this process so you end up with five rows, then sew the five rows together to create one rectangle five squares across and eight squares down. This creates the centre of the quilt (diagram 2).

- Cut top, sides and end borders 18 cm wide, 160 cm in length and 112 cm across ends.

- Attach border fabric to the long sides of the quilt centre to form a neat edge, then attach remaining lengths to the shorter sides. Mitre corners to create a neat diagonal finish (diagram 3).

- After sewing on borders cut underside after laying quilt on top of material.

- Pin backing satin, right side facing puffed squares, and sew edge of border to the backing piece of satin, leaving gap so the quilt can be turned in the right way (diagram 4).

- Turn quilt in the right way through the gap left.

- Add additional quilt filling inside the edges of the quilt to plump up three sides of the border and then sew around the quilt between the puffed squares and the border to hold quilt filling in place (diagram 5).

- Lightly stuff the fourth edge of the border and finish by sewing up the remain gap. ☘

Diagram 4

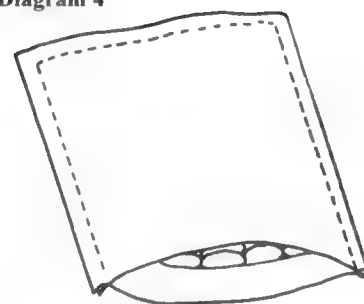


Diagram 3

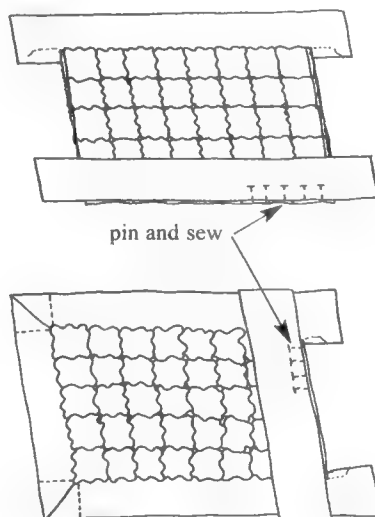
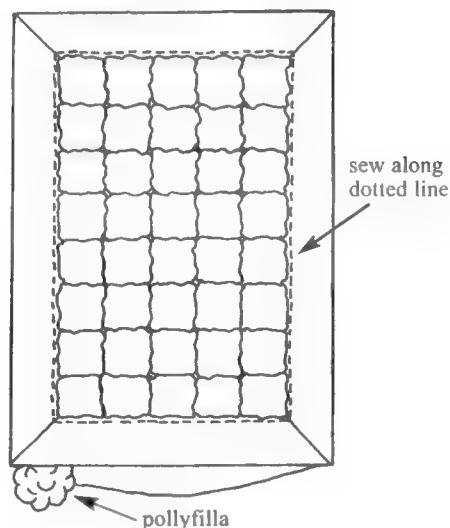


Diagram 5



# EVERY DROP ON THE CROP

by Alan Stewart, Alexandra Hills, Qld.

Even the most casual viewer, reader, listener etc can't help but have noticed we are in a most serious drought, whether this is a fluctuation like an El-Nino effect or something more sinister like global warming is anyone's guess at this stage. However, it is really necessary to save as much water as possible both from an environmental viewpoint and the fact that water has to be paid for. So the maximum use should be made of it.

Even before water charges came into force, I could never see the point of wasting a couple of litres to flush urine

into the drains when it is a perfectly useful nitrogenous fertiliser. Quite okay on the fruit trees, those medieval monks used it all the time and I swear you can't taste it when you eat the fruit! Surface watering is wasteful, especially if there is heavy mulch on the soil.

Use any of the plastic household containers with the bottoms cut out, a smallish hole drilled in the cap and a small plug of coconut fibre stuffed into the neck. This will act as a filter and allow water or liquid fertiliser to slowly trickle down to the root area where it will do the most good, without losing

any to evaporation.

Dig the containers in about halfway, as close as possible to the plant. Of course, this is only useful with comparatively large ones: cabbages, caulies, tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants etc. Soft drink bottles will do fine for these, but bushes and trees can make use of the larger 2.5 – 3-litre containers. The containers have a fair lifespan of two to three years and they are easily replaced. The soft drink bottles can be collected around picnic areas and roadside verges. Let the litterbugs pay for them I say! Happy collecting. ☘

# RECYCLING RUNS RIOT

## Scarecrows

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

Scarecrows are a recycling heaven. Ever since Wurzel Gummage, played by John Pertwee, I've strongly identified with poor old Wurzel being jilted by that awful, haughty Miss Polly. Maybe it's because through life I've been attracted to every Miss Polly in sight. Silly man! But I just can't help myself.

Scarecrows are an amazing invention. They scare the crows that peck and break your window glass and eat your seeds, eggs and crops. These days too, with so many burglaries, they are just the shot to leave inside the house in view of the front door or windows to scare away potential burglars and home invaders.

One dressed in an approximation of a policeman's uniform ought to do the trick, though a Darth Vader might not fool too many. A full-size shop mannequin would make the job easy. I've seen them advertised in the *Trading Post*, a second-hand-things-for-sale newspaper, and a very handy resource. If you don't want to do that, you can always make up old shopping bags full of other old plastic shopping bags and stuff the clothes to look the way you choose. Faces can be a mask of cardboard covered with waterproof plastic, then cloth, and painted. You'll have to

look at the face for a few years – this is a weird kind of marriage – so don't rush things. Ready-made plastic masks are available. I don't think they necessarily need be ugly, just someone such as your favourite (or unfavourite) politician. You could even have a fun thing for the kids by placing a small radio speaker under the clothes, with some figure of eight twin insulated wire to a microphone. It would sure scare the hell out of those crows. Hands are easy, just stuff some pink rubber gloves. Well, the rest is up to you.

When I was visiting the UK years ago there was a woman who made a good living making 'friends', as she called them, and she sold a lot to pensioners and others who liked a good chat. I suppose it's someone to talk to after the spouse has 'gone for a walk' to escape the constant babble. Some people don't want a conversation or dialogue, they're quite happy rattling on to 'anybody'. 'Friends', 'scarecrows', 'minders', call them what you like, it's a great way to recycle all those old wedding dresses, flared trousers, kilts and other items we've grown out of in more ways than one. Clean out the attics and dress up those scarecrows, I say. ☘



### ... OOPS!

Sorry Bob! On the contents page of the last edition of *Grass Roots* we inadvertently attributed the article 'Be Ruthless' to Robert Millet, when it was in fact contributed by Bob Rankin – as (correctly) stated on page 56 where the story appeared. ☘

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# Drought Relief For Wildlife

by Neville Jackson, Valhalla.

Our property work schedule and inclinations do not normally include any feeding of native wildlife. We just make sure our bush creatures have water available. However, last winter (2001), a skinny young eastern grey doe with a joey in her pouch stood at our gate with her snout pressed to the netting. She presented a woeful picture. In our home paddock winter grass surrounds are 'burnt off' by cold and have little nutrient because native grasses withdraw essential minerals and moisture to their roots to weather dry and cold times. Grazers gain little benefit from any dry feed.

This scrawny doe stood at the gate, plainly starved and probably affected by intestinal worms made worse by her poor condition. We doubted she would carry her joey much longer. A change to standing orders seemed to be called for. I gathered weeds and clumps of nuisance grasses around the orchard while she watched. As I approached her she moved off only a few hops, her seemingly over-large eyes only on the pitchfork full of grass. After I dropped this load over the fence the doe looked hard at the offering, then me, then back at the grass. Hunger won. She tentatively nibbled at the greens, hesitantly hopped away and then looked, just a few metres away. I withdrew to allow her to feed while we sat on the verandah and watched. Soon everything was finished, including the roots.

Over the next few weeks each afternoon the doe stood in our mowed perimeter area about 20 metres away while I gathered an armful of grass and weeds. When these went over the fence she regularly ate with me still only a few metres away.

I made small talk, which startled her at first, but she soon resumed feeding. Princess's (as she was now known) fur and appearance gradually improved till there was a gloss to her pelt, and her joey benefited as well.

About this time neighbours ran short of water for their stock, so I made our



'Princess' enjoying her afternoon tea.

dam water available. This took the level down fairly low, but there was enough for our resident wildlife. Just in case, we put out 20-litre drums of second-grade water near the gate. I had two reasons for this: to allow my perimeter to be constantly cropped and made fire-safe in dry times, and to observe more easily our varied wildlife. Roos rarely drank from the drums, but water always went down at night. My binoculars have a wide field with good light gain (meaning I can see plainly in low-light conditions). Soon I observed that the water drinkers were two wallabies, russet and chocolate brown with additional dark markings on the face. One, the smaller and poorer of the two, had an advanced joey in its pouch. Trouble was, the timid wallabies only feed when roos leave, and usually by then there isn't anything left.

Some weeks later the weather broke with general rain and warmer condi-

tions. Within days green shoots appeared in our surrounding paddocks. Princess came less and less to our gate as feed became available. Her joey was tipped out and shown to us at the gate and timidly staggered about until allowed back into the pouch.

During the summer months Princess stayed nearby, followed closely by 'Rastus'. The two easily identified in the small mob that trimmed our fence-line. We had previously noted that roos prefer grasses almost exclusively while wallabies feed on wild herbage, blossoms, mosses and even field mushrooms. Hence, this year (2002), during the extended dry winter, we put our kitchen vegetable scraps and peelings into a bowl near the gateway.

The offerings included pumpkin skins, webbing and seeds (cooked), choko skins, cabbage and cauli scraps, fruit skins and cores. Even kiwi fruit peel, capsicum and chilli disappeared.

The roos ignored the scrap bowl, only grass interested them. Obviously wallabies are used to a more adventuresome diet, probably because they tend to remain on rocky, timbered areas while roos travel more widely in grassy areas.

Each night the offerings disappeared, then finally late one afternoon the doe, a black-tailed wallaby, hopped in and eagerly ate from the bowl. We didn't see her often, just the empty bowl each morning. Then a buck wallaby showed up and intimidated her while he finished her dinner. As he tended to come in earlier we held our offerings back until dusk, preferring to feed mother and offspring rather than the buck.

One afternoon we saw a black-tailed wallaby doe with joey at the gate, another wallaby hopped up and pushed her aside. She also had a joey. We hadn't previously seen two female wallabies at the same time. Before the second doe had finished the scrap bowl the buck appeared and took over.

These wallabies are noted for their



timidity, but hunger makes them braver. All winter, with its attendant dry, the grasses remained dormant and few roos showed. Only Princess and Rastus remained regular customers. We don't see an end to the dry for awhile, but until good rains come we're confident the resident joeys will survive and prosper.

Recently, we pushed a wheelbarrow down to our almost empty dam. Our intent was to take a photo of our dam-side barbecue set-up. For the shot we took rake, barbecue tools, camp oven and an already made cake. I arranged the items for a photo, looked through the viewfinder and was amazed to see Princess and Rastus moving about in the background.

Just three metres away! Obviously they had followed us to the dam to check if we had anything edible. City visitors have commented upon our 'tame' wildlife, but they're not tame they're just 'gentled'.

Princess eats outside the gate as I write this. I'd previously tossed weeds and grasses over to be rewarded with a soft 'haaar', her first thank-you! It's rare and rewarding to receive a communication from a wild animal. We constantly get 'bird talk' to greet us, and more commonly to be informed that the birdbath needs a top-up, but an acknowledgement from a marsupial is something special. Princess's joey is smaller and later than those of other roos and the wallabies, still she looks good and healthy. Also, while she and her marsupial rivals come in regularly during winters I'll have my firebreak nicely cropped and some new young ones to find names for. ☘

# The Big Move

by Sherrian O'Connor, In Transit.

Butterflies are fluttering, kittens cavorting, stomachs churning – we're nervous! The 'big move' is approaching, rapidly. So rapidly that we're down to the last double-page family planner. (Three months to a sheet calendars stuck on the kitchen cupboard.) The days are filling with appointments and that's without the unexpected spanners. Just as a week seems clear for some serious packing, clang, another piece of hardware lobs in to disrupt proceedings. Doubts hover on the horizon, waiting to flood a low moment. 'What-ifs' and horror scenarios play through the mind. Guilt surfaces. Are we being selfish? Probably, but why not? Surely it's time for a little self-indulgence.

Then there are the practical fears. Will we realise enough on the house sale? We have to buy a new (old) one and have some cash left towards a retirement income. We're not looking to a massive income, but one can grow tired of beans. Well, actually, we hope to grow our own beans. Which is partly the reason for the shift – to find somewhere with enough space to rotate the vegie beds. Pack after pack of seeds state 'likes an open, sunny position'. Yeah – right! Not that we haven't had some successes; three months without buying a carrot, tomatoes that smelt like tomatoes and a good crop of broad beans – except we found none of us likes them! But we want more – potatoes, sweet corn, capsicums and peas, zucchini, bush beans, runner beans, cauliflowers and salads. Then there are the fruit trees, berry cage and hazelnut hedge and a really lavish picking bed for house flowers. We're agreed more chooks are a must, but there are two camps re acquiring a pig or cow. Oh well!

'It's not like a holiday you know.' 'You won't find *that* there.' 'What will you *do*?' Well-meaning comments come from all sides. Have we really thought it through? Yes, we think so. Sure, there will be things that haven't

occurred to us. Things we'd assumed that aren't actually so. But we have done our research. We've visited twice in the last four years and narrowed the field of where we wish to settle. What else have we done? Visited estate agents and viewed houses, checked prices and sources for new and used furniture, investigated libraries, clubs, medical facilities and markets, and even found a good fish and chip shop. I think we do know what we're doing. We can't afford to stay here and we both hate the heat. Fresher air and fewer freeways are a bonus. We don't need 24-hour shopping or frantic entertainment. We're looking forward to a slower pace where people have the time and inclination to chat. It's still scary, but exciting too. There comes a time in life when you have to stop dreaming and 'just do it.' This is that time. Tasmania, here we come. ☘



Brian and Sherrian in their old garden in Victoria, anticipating their big move to Tassie.

## \$ Making Money \$ From Home \$

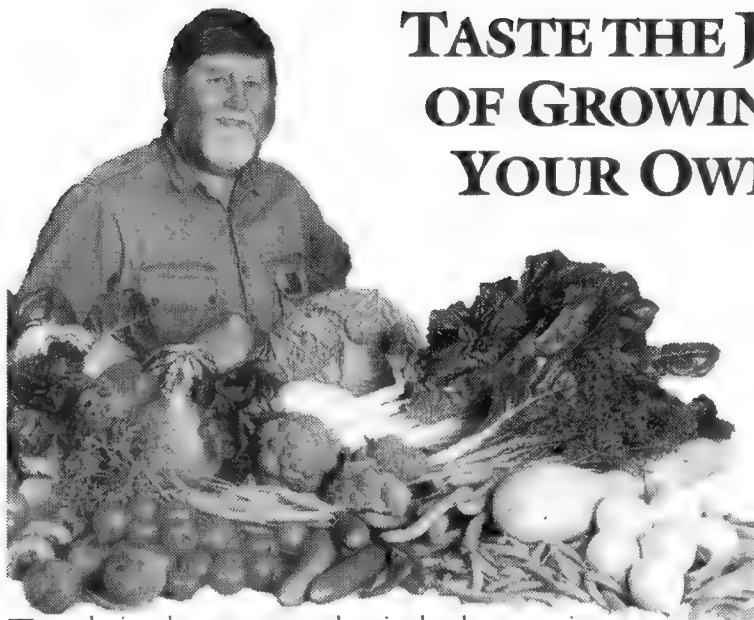
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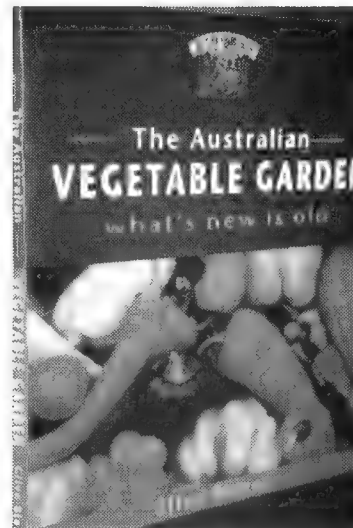
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# A Chain Of Beads Plant

by Robyn Leah, Cessnock, NSW.

I knew there had to be a use for these dried peas, apart from eating them. This chain of beads 'plant' is easy to make, costs very little, and looks so real none of my friends knew it wasn't until I told them. Now we all have one or two.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

1 packet of blue boiler peas  
quantity of fishing line or knitting cotton, preferably green  
bottle of green food colouring  
pair of old scissors  
about 30 strands of 24 or 26 gauge florists' wire, available from florists or a reel of thin fuse wire available from electrical suppliers

## METHOD

Soak peas in about four cups of water overnight along with four drops of food colouring. Next day, drain and dry

peas on a towel and leave for two days in a cool place. Cut fishing line or cotton into lengths of about 35 to 40 centimetres. Cut about 20 lengths and tie a knot at one end. Next, make about 200 hooks by placing about half a centimetre of wire over a scissor blade and folding it down. Remove blade and cut wire off.

When peas are ready, begin making strands by inserting a hook into each pea and threading it onto the line to the end. Next, press hook very firmly into pea to secure it to the line. Cut off any ends that protrude. Continue to thread peas until you have about 10 centimetres of line left. Make as many strands in this manner as you wish. About 20 strands makes a small plant.

When you have made enough strands, secure the ends and tie together. Your 'plant' is now ready to hang in



Chain of beads 'plant', a decorative imitation – and you don't even have to wait for it to grow.

a pot or wire basket. A certain amount of shrinkage is natural, but does not detract from the look of the 'plant'.

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We invite all who are called to submit themselves to God's way of peace, and who desire to dwell in unity among brethren, to contact us



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# Novel Lawn Mowers

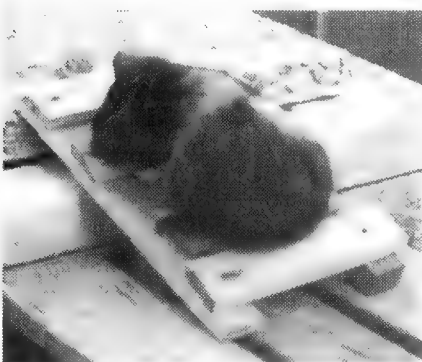
by Beth Montgomery, Wonthaggi, Vic.

It all began because my six-year-old daughter wanted her pets to have babies. We ended up with a little herd of guinea pigs which needed to be kept somewhere. We decided on a tractor system for mowing the front lawn.

The beauty of guinea pigs is that they're cuddlier than a conventional lawn mower. They also drop little parcels of fertiliser on the lawn and they provide hours of entertainment for the children each day. I don't know why more people don't do it. I can just imagine every suburban household with a guinea pig tractor mowing the lawn. What a saving on fossil fuels! Not to mention the reduction of noise pollution. I've also heard that you can eat them, but we're not too keen on eating our furry friends.

In constructing our tractors we needed to think about how to make them light, strong and waterproof. We didn't want dogs overturning the cages, break-ins – or break-outs, for that matter. The tractors also needed to be light enough for one person to shift each day. We settled on strong galvanised square wire mesh.

This was reasonably easy to bend into shape to make a long rectangular block. From then on we had to cut end pieces to size and slot them in. All the joins were done simply by bending the mesh over, strand by strand, and interlocking them with pliers. The wire



A young guinea pig scales a homemade ladder.



Beth with an adult male, Gordon, enjoying a game of hide and seek.

mesh cost us just under \$10 a metre. To make a decent sized run for three or four piggies we decided on only 1.5 or 2 metre lengths. The height of the mesh became the length of the run.

We found some old sheets of roofing iron that were relatively soft to cut. We punched small holes in these to make it possible to attach them to the frame with wire. These formed the cover for the tractors. Guinea pigs can die from exposure to temperature extremes, so it's important to provide shade and wind protection. All the tin was twitched into place.

Our finished products cost about \$20 to \$30 to make. Many portable hutches we priced at pet shops sold for around \$100.

We now have several tractors and we're in the process of making more. Breeding boars must be separated from one another, so we need to provide more space for these jealous little fellows.

The sows and pups are housed in hutches at night, each with a wire mesh floor. Soiled litter falls through and is easily scraped into the compost or used as a super-nutritious mulch layer

around young trees. Our system is a great way to provide fertiliser as well as keeping the grass short.

## GUINEA PIG GYM

Let's face it, guinea pigs will get fat if all they do is eat. It's important to get their little legs moving and stretching to overcome obesity. Guinea pigs are inquisitive and they like to explore in their own way, at their own pace. And they certainly love hiding. It's a shame to have them cooped up all day when they could be satisfying their innate curiosity.

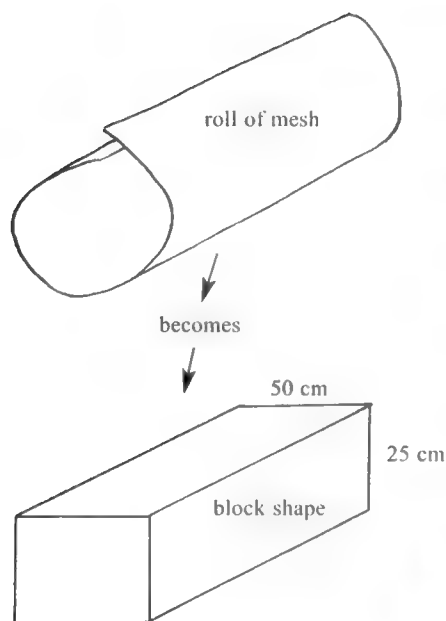
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The best way to get guinea pigs exploring and exercising is to acquire some basic miniature gym equipment for them. Below are a few ideas to help exercise our no-longer-tubby friends. Maybe you can think of some more yourself?

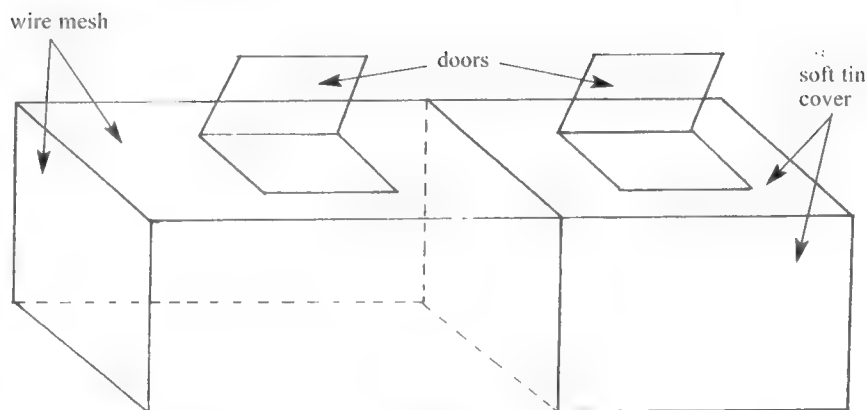
#### Building Blocks, Ladders and Bridges

Believe it or not, guinea pigs love to climb. They are happy to ascend a level to reach a piece of carrot. However, their stout little legs are not meant for steep climbs, so it's important to construct climbing equipment with a broad base and a gentle rise.

Blocks can be easily obtained for free. Many large hardware stores regularly throw out timber offcuts. Most offcuts are small timber pieces. They are ideal for nailing to a small piece of masonite to make a low broad platform. Guinea pigs love hiding under them and climbing up them. Often they will remain sitting at higher altitudes and chirp. I think it's a guinea pig version of 'I'm the king of the castle'.

Small pieces of timber can be tacked together to make ladders and bridges as well. It's so easy even the kids can do it. If the cage is large, a whole network of climbing equipment can be left in place. While you're not looking the guinea pigs will be scampering all over it.

#### Guinea Pig Tractor



Large size bent to fit rabbit's height how did he get in there?

#### Tunnels and Pots

The best guinea pig toy is a length of PVC pipe. It makes an ideal tunnel to hide in. One of our sows is so timid that the only way to catch her is when she's in the tube, but she won't come out for a cuddle! Guinea pigs like to chase one another around. A tunnel is a great novelty for such 'follow the leader' games. Flower pots are also good hiding places. The bases can even be cut out to make a small tunnel.

How do you know if your guinea pigs are getting enough exercise? If you see them scamper along, jump in the air and squeak, then you've just witnessed them jumping for joy. That's what you'll see more of when you set up some gym equipment for them.

GRs 53 & 74 have articles on the care and raising of guinea pigs. GR 74 in particular has very comprehensive information for anyone thinking of keeping these animals. 🐷

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# Managing The Mossie Menace

by Heather Powell, Nelligen, NSW.

Mossies annoy, they bite, they itch, they whine in the night. Worse, they transmit viral diseases. It's well worth reducing the mossie population for protection from these pests. Most mossies fly around (and bite us) in the vicinity of where they were born, so removing wet breeding places makes a great difference to local populations. Ever had a look for mossie 'wrigglers' around your place? Take a wander around to check for any repairs or maintenance which are needed for protection from mossies.

## BREEDING SPOTS

Eggs are laid in wet places – any wet places! One small pool of water can produce thousands of mossies each week. Check for and remove potential breeding sites around your home.

- Pot plant drip saucers/trays which are constantly wet provide enough water for *lots* of mossies. Empty weekly or fill with sand.

- Remove or empty old ice cream containers, pots, tins, tyres, or watering cans lying behind the shed, under the house, in the kids' play area.

- Empty, clean and refill animal water bowls/troughs regularly.

- Are *all* rainwater storage tanks totally sealed from mossies? Even on the shed/garage/carport/boatsheds? Are there flyscreen seals on all inlets and overflows? Or have they deteriorated? Or were never installed? Or have they fallen out?

- Do gutters and downpipes hold water permanently? Can they be aligned for better drainage? Could mossie netting be stuffed in each end of the pipe? Somehow remove access for mossies to the water source.

- Are garden ponds and fountains mossie heaven? Could they be stocked with fish or frogs which eat the mossie eggs and larvae (include hideouts for protection from predatory birds), or with ducks (if you don't mind mud), or emptied and drained weekly?

- Birdbaths need complete empty-

ing and drying weekly.

- Septic tanks/sewerage pipes can be mosquito larvae heaven! Check for broken exposed pipes, seals around tanks and vents. Is the exhaust vent (often above the roofline) protected by mossie screen? Or is it a highway in and out for flying beasties? Check inspection pits, absorption trenches, pumps, all pipes and exits from the tank(s). After a tank is pumped out, check all seals once more; don't assume 'they'll get it right' (they aren't the ones bitten by the mossies).

- Do you have a grease/gully trap somewhere? Is it sealed from mossies?

- Depressions in the ground hold water naturally. Have the kids been making mudpies and left a wet muddy patch? Has the backhoe/bulldozer used in earthworks left depressions which fill with water? Fill them in!

- Stormwater drains, do they really drain? Or are they blocked and stagnant breeding grounds? Clear them so water flows freely away.

- Swimming pools should be either empty and dry or full and constantly well maintained.

Look around with the eye of a mossie searching for a wet patch to lay eggs. It's amazing what you find; it doesn't have to be big or deep, just wet!

## MOSSIE PROTECTION

Once mossie breeding spots are removed, implement means of physical protection, or check and repair those you already have in place.

- Are flyscreens on doors and windows in good condition? It's cheap and relatively easy to replace holed screen mesh.

- Do screen doors shut properly or are there gaps around the edges? Mossies are *small*. Do doors shut quickly by themselves after being opened? Mossies are *quick*.

- Do the dog/cat/ducks/chooks/goats/lambs/piglets/calves/small children push on the bottom of the fly-screen doors? Maybe a solid section

where they push would reduce wear.

- Do the mossies hang out around verandahs and pergolas until a door opens and then scoot inside? Explore ways to reduce the mossie population hiding around doors and windows just waiting to come inside.

- Dusk is the most active time for flying mossies. When having a barbecue stock up on personal repellent and citronella candles (lots of them) to form a protective barrier around the outdoor area. Mosquito coils are also helpful.

- Mossie nets for all beds (including guests') are a great idea for a good night's sleep in warm weather. There always seems to be one inside to plague us all night! A good night's sleep is a precious commodity for everyone and mossies are good at disturbing it!

- Flyswats are good value inside buildings.

- Mossies don't like hot, dry, sunny days so they hide. In the garden, are there plants which they seem to prefer? Maybe judicious pruning to open them up to sun and light could reduce their attraction for mossies.

Look around and you too will find ways to reduce the population near your home/workplace/holiday home. If everyone removed some mossie habitat, there would be a difference. 🍀

## REPELLENT PLANTS

Mosquito repellent plants to grow around verandahs, pergolas, outdoor eating areas and near doors and windows are balm of Gilead, basil, citronella, daisy cress, fennel, feverfew, garlic, horehound, lavender, marigold, mint, 'Mossie Buster' pelargonium, rosemary, southernwood, yarrow. Also strew around leaves of eucalypts, neem or camphor laurel. 🍀



# Brew Up A Scrumpy

by Anthony Thorogood, Burra, SA.

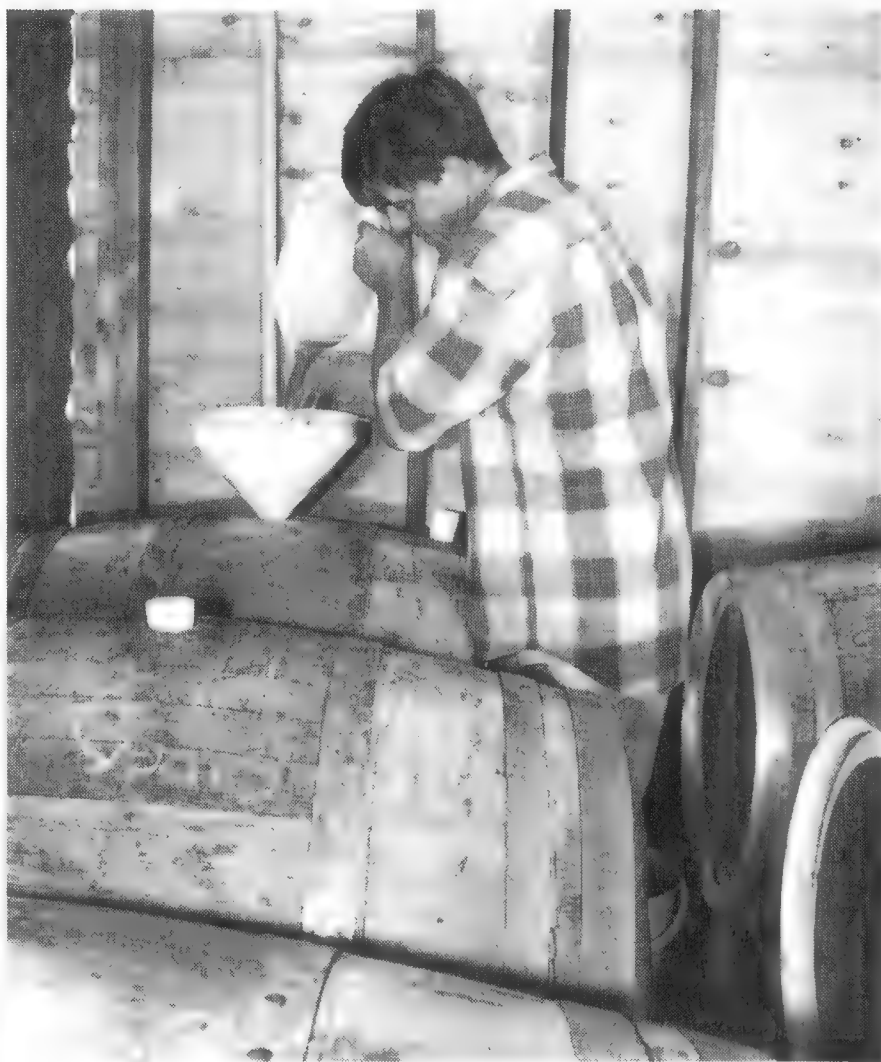
Inspired by my first bite of a Cox's Orange Pippin, I fell in love, not just with old-fashioned apples but with their names: Brown Snout, Yarlington Mill, Somerset Redstreak, Kentish Fillbasket and London Pippin, to name a few. Cider, cooking and eating apples have fascinating names and histories and all can be used to make an interesting brew, scrumpy.

Scrumpy is another fine old name derived from the word *scrumping*, to collect windfall apples, or in many cases to go raiding in the middle of the night and help oneself to the fruit. My wife Susan is from Yorkshire in northern England and she used to *scrump* the neighbour's apple tree when she was a lass. My dad, a London lad, would go *scrumping* the large green cooking apples when, in August, the whole family uprooted itself and took the train down to Kent to go hop picking.

So what is scrumpy and how is it made? Scrumpy is young, unfiltered, rough, straight-from-the-keg cider. A Spanish visitor to our cider cellar



Winter Banana apples: A love of the evocative old-fashioned names led to a career devoted to apples.



Anthony making cider the traditional way, fermenting the apple juice in oak barrels.

explained to me how cider was once made on his farm. The equipment needed was an oak bucket, an oak stave, an oak barrel and a lot of strong people. The cider apples were piled into the bucket, slowly pounded with the stave and the juice was tipped into the barrel. If this brew is left to ferment for awhile then drained off, the result is a very rough scrumpy.

Since we opened our cider house people have frequently bent our ears and told us hundreds of scrumpy sto-

ries. An Australian girl told us how she flew to England, landed at Heathrow and, jet lagged and tired, drove down to Cornwall, stopped at a pub, drank a pint of scrumpy and, she said, 'I don't remember anything after that'.

When we first opened our cider house we made a rough cider or scrumpy, but today we make sophisticated apple wines and vintage champagne. However, a very simple scrumpy can be made in the home without the need for an expensive



press, expensive vats or expensive cooling units, in fact, with no equipment at all.

First, get hold of the best apple juice available in a clear plastic or glass bottle. Next, you must drink half a glass of juice to create a little space; add a sprinkle of bread yeast to the container, tighten the lid and shake. Now loosen the lid – this is very important or your bottle will blow up – and place the bottle in a warm but not a hot position for 24 hours. Fermentation should now have started so the object is to slow it down. You do this by placing the bottle in a not-too-cold refrigerator and leaving it until the juice has fermented to dryness, and you have scrumpy!

Read more about Thorogood's apple growing and cider making venture in GR 144. 🍷

Left: Susan picking the cider apples.

## APPLE VARIETIES

### The Best Apples Make The Best Cider

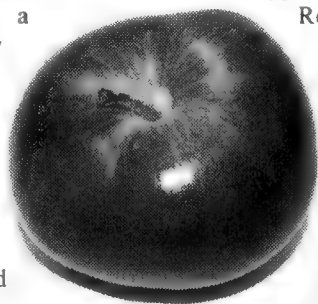
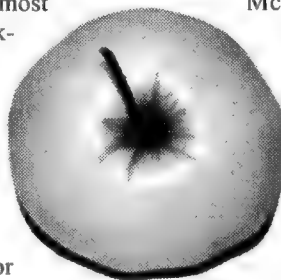
The very best way to make good cider is to use the best cider apples, which means you must plant an orchard. Small apples are required because they contain lots of tannin in the skin. Acidic apples are needed for bite. You will also need apples with a lot of natural sugar. Cider apples often have all three requirements in abundance, especially if grown in perfect conditions – cold winters, hot summers and low rainfall.

The classic English cider apple is the Redstreak, said to make a full-bodied cider of a shimmering yellow colour. The modern Somerset Redstreak is a distant descendent of its grand forebear. It is a small apple with red stripes; it flowers early and the fruit is picked mid season.

In the warmer parts of

Australia, which includes most of the mainland, a few cooking apples should be planted in a cider orchard to provide much-needed acidity in the cider blend. The Bramley Seedling is the cooking apple *par excellence*. It is superb for apple sauce or blended with Golden Delicious in apple pies. Bramleys produce big green apples. The trees need two other apple trees nearby (such as Redstreak and Yarlington Mill) in order to set fruit. The Bramley must be picked quite early, under Australian conditions, while the fruit is still green. We pick ours in February.

So where can you buy heritage apple trees? You must consult an expert. In South Australia try Perrys at



McLaren Flat: 08-8383-0268.

Elsewhere in Australia try Clive Winnmill, Badgers Keep, Chewton, Victoria: 03-5472-3338. Good luck with the orchard. In the meantime, just about the best cider in the world can be had from our farm at Burra, South Australia.

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# Making Seed-Raising Mixture At Home

by Nevin Sweeney, St Clair, NSW.

For most of the past 20 years I have grown vegies in the backyard, and for most of that time I have bought seedlings of various types. This has left me with a world class collection of empty punnets and labels, but has no doubt over the years cost me a considerable amount of cash. Punnets of vegie seedlings now cost over \$3 each. There is also a point of ethics here, when one is striving for a measure of self-sufficiency to go and buy seedlings seems to be working counter to the cause!

I therefore thought that this year I would not only raise my own seedlings (as I had dabbled with in previous years), but I would also make my own seed-raising mixture from scratch, which was something new. I dragged out my old farm technology textbooks on plant propagation and did a bit of searching on the Net. I wanted a seed-raising mixture based on easily available and (at least partially) home-produced materials.

## THE INGREDIENTS

### Compost

After several reasonably successful goes at compost making I found that I had a good supply of this raw material. It smelled like rich soil but looked like a dark gluggy mass. Obviously there was some treatment required here. Once I had dug it out and let it dry a bit, I passed it through an old-fashioned garden sieve. This broke it up and turned it into friable, loose material that was easily mixed with other ingredients. The compost helps to retain moisture and provides nutrients.

### Peat Moss

Peat moss is a classic component of seed-raising mixtures, but digging up peat is not the best from an ecological point of view and, due to its acid nature, requires lime to be added to the

seed-raising mix. While on the lookout for a substitute I found a compressed block of coconut fibre which, when soaked in water gave up to nine litres of peat-like material. It was also nonacid and recycled, an imported material which would otherwise be dumped. I have seen it sold as 'Fast Peat' or horticultural coir. It is also gluggy when reconstituted, but when passed through the sieve it becomes friable and easily mixed with the remainder of the ingredients. The coir retains moisture in the mixture.

### Sand

The sand (according to the experts) should be coarse so that it does not crust over, keeping an open structure, and it should be river rather than beach sand which is contaminated with salt. If you have this available on your property, good for you, but I had to buy my sand at \$5 a bag from our local produce merchant. The sand keeps the structure open and free draining and prevents the rest of the ingredients clagging together (a technical term).

### Vermiculite or Perlite

These are two more expensive components that are expanded mica and volcanic rock respectively. They both assist in keeping the mixture aerated while retaining moisture. Neither are home producible but I have found that a better germination rate is obtained with perlite at least.

## MIXING

Now, having found, manufactured, mined or bought your raw materials, it is time to mix them. Just before we get to that I want to let you know about one of the most mind bogglingly useful pieces of apparatus that I have ever found – the pet litter tray. These are a decent sized plastic tray that retails in the el cheapo type merchandise shops for around \$2, and they are Australian



Some of the equipment Nevin uses to make his seed-raising mixture: take-away food container, cat litter tray and sieve.

made! So far I have used them for:

- holding the compost while it dries out,
- mixing the seed-raising mixture in,
- a work platform while filling punnets with the seed-raising mix,
- setting up as a capillary bed (more later),
- washing second-hand punnets in disinfectant before reuse,
- and if all else fails you can let your cat crap in them!

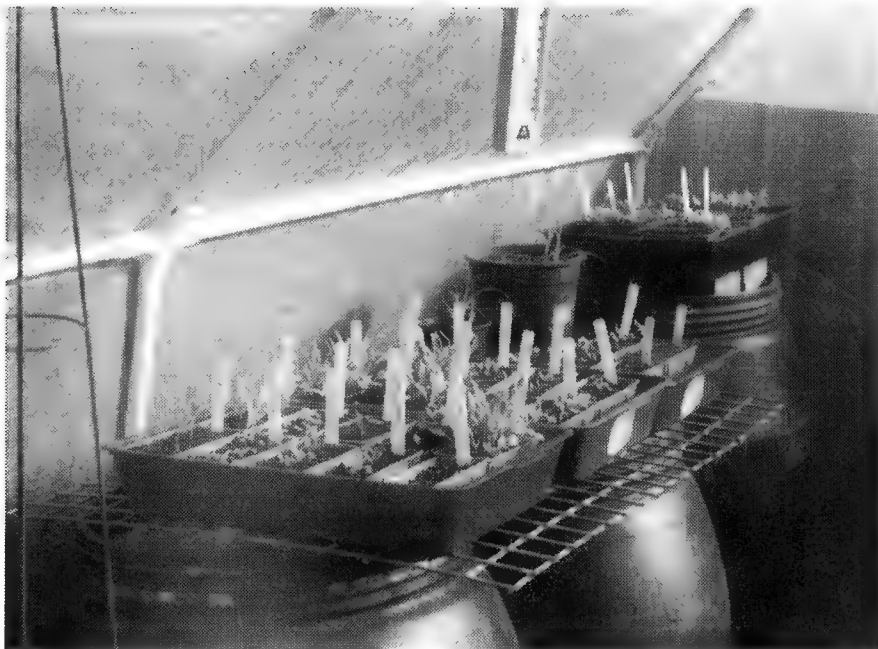
I have half a dozen of them in various colours and find a new use for them almost every day.

So, now to mixing up your seed-raising mix. I tried a number of different combinations, but the one that seems to work best for me, time after time, for both flowers and vegies is as follows:

- 2 parts by volume compost,
- 2 parts by volume horticultural coir,
- 1 part by volume sharp sand,
- 1 part by volume perlite.

I use a round, approximately 500-millilitre take-away food container as the measure and the above mix makes enough so that it is still comfortably able to be mixed in my mixing tray and





Seedlings in the hothouse sitting in cat litter trays with damp sand in the bottom to water them by capillary action.

fills approximately 10 standard punnets. I just mix it through with my hands until it is homogenous, which takes about five minutes, and it is ready for use.

**A Quiet Warning:** I don't know the technicalities, but some people have become sick with legionella infections after inhaling the dust while working with commercial potting mixes. If you keep all your raw materials moist, that should keep the dust down, but if you are still concerned it might be worth purchasing an Australian Standards approved dust mask to wear while doing this work.

You can now store your seed-raising mix in a closed container (to keep it moist), or use it to fill your punnets or flats and plant your seeds into them. But if, like me, your punnets are all second-hand, you should wash them out in a mild disinfectant solution like Dettol ® so that you do not transfer any bugs or greeblies (another technical term) between batches of seedlings.

#### WATERING

Once I have planted my seeds into the punnets, I make a capillary bed by half-filling one of my all-purpose cat litter trays with the coarse sand. The sand is then soaked with water until there is a

small amount that remains on the surface. The punnets can now be placed on the wet sand and the moisture is drawn up into the punnets by capillary action, if the seed raising mix is moist to begin with. From this point on you can water into the sand, which prevents the seeds from being washed out by the force of the water and the sand acts as a store of moisture to keep the punnets moist on even very hot days.

I have used this approach for over a year now and last autumn I raised a decent sized batch of edible flowers (marigolds, carnations, poppies, dianthus etc) and, with the exception of chillies (I think that it was a dud batch of seed or maybe a bit too old), I did not buy any seedlings for my vegie patch this spring. As I write this there are more seeds germinating in the hothouse to replace the ones growing in the patch as they go past their prime (tomatoes or cucumbers) or are eaten (lettuce, brassicas etc). It was very rewarding from the financial viewpoint, but also because of the level of satisfaction gained from being that teeny bit more self-sufficient. Try it yourself – it's worth the effort.

For more information about legionella in the garden see GR 140, page 27. ♫



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# The Carrot Slow Cooker Cake

by Cassandra Turnbull, Kinsholme, Qld.

Everyone knows slow cookers make great casseroles, but using them to bake a cake? Well that was a new one to me. A little sceptically I read on in my instruction manual. My first try, a packet cake mix slow-cooker style – not too bad . . . for a packet cake. The cake got the thumbs up from the boys in my family, so I ventured on, till we got 'The Carrot'. The packet chocolate cake had lasted two days, and the carrot cake only half a day!

This was golden food, real cake. Dark, moist and gone before I could get a third piece. And what a cheap way to bake. When set at low (so the instruction manual says) a slow cooker draws less electricity than a 100-watt light bulb.

My alternative recipe is pretty easy to follow. Throw into a bowl all the ingredients in the order they are listed.

- 1/4 cup near melted butter
  - 1/4 cup brown sugar
  - 1/2 cup white or table sugar
  - 2 eggs
  - 2 cups SR flour
  - 1/2 tsp baking powder
  - 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
  - 1/2 tsp salt
  - 2 cups peeled and grated carrots (that's about two large carrots)
  - 1/4 cup large raisins
  - 1/2 cup sunflower seeds
- Mix well using a fork or wooden spoon, not a mixing machine. Place



This delicious carrot cake is perfect to take with you on an outdoor picnic and is easy and economical to make in a slow cooker.

mixture into a greased round cake tin that will fit into your slow cooker. Put the lot into the pot and place a few paper towels over the cake tin top. Just two to three hours on high will get you a carrot cake you just can't buy. I cook mine for three hours, but it depends on your slow cooker.

Don't put any water in the bottom of your slow cooker and don't open the lid to gaze at your rising delight or it will flop, at least for the first two hours anyway. Be patient. When your two hours are up, you can take the lid off and test your cake with a knife or skewer. If it comes away clean your cake is cooked. I once forgot all about this cake and overcooked it by two and a half hours. Amazingly, it didn't burn, was still moist and tasted terrific.

I suggest topping it with an icing such as passion fruit frosting. Again, my alternative recipe is pretty easy to follow.

- 3/4 cup soft butter
- 1 cup icing sugar
- 1 passion fruit

Throw all ingredients into a bowl. Add a tiny bit of water if it's too thick, or a little cornflour if it needs thicken-

ing. Mix well and spread over the top of the cooled cake.

This cake goes down well with a large dollop of thick cream (stuff you can stand a spoon in) and a cup of hot chocolate. Good 'old-fashioned' real cake. After polishing off a bit more than my fair share, a slow walk around the property helps pacify my sensitive thoughts on waistlines. ♪



## CARROTS FOR HEALTH

Carrots are an excellent source of vitamin A and provide moderate amounts of vitamin C and fibre. They have more betacarotene than any other vegetable. Cooking reduces the vitamin C content but makes the betacarotene and antioxidants more available to the body. Carrot juice is a popular choice of vegetable juice drinkers, said to help clear mucus from the throat and lungs, prevent colitis and relieve digestive problems. Carrot soup is also said to be beneficial for digestive upsets, and a tea made from the seeds is taken to overcome flatulence. ♪

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# ‘C’ FOR CHOOKS

## Not The A-Frame Chicken Roost

by Warwick Rowell, Dunsborough, WA

**Still amazed at all the uses Roberino found for old tyres (GR151 & 152)? Here’s another innovative reuse for a waste disposal nightmare.**

Linda Woodrow’s book *The Permaculture Garden* described a method of building a chicken tractor from polypipe and wire that was very practical. It needed a covered roost inside the circular dome to protect the chickens from rain, and this had to be independent of the main structure because anything attached to it made it a giant umbrella that blew away in the wind.

We had six chooks in a brand new dome, with no roost and no protection, and the winter was getting into full swing – 20 to 40 millimetres of rain in a day, winds up to 50 or 60 knots, and a high wind-chill factor. We were contemplating building the traditional A-frame. But the creative juices started to flow as I contemplated the inaccuracy of my carpentry, the hassle of building triangles, the weight of these structures and so on. What was the point of having a light portable cage if the shelter was too heavy? The light dawned, and after about an hour of fiddling I had my first ‘ceefer’ – which is short for ‘C for Chooks’. Two people could knock one up in about 15 minutes now we’ve worked it out.

The list of materials was impressively short and just about all recycled: two tyres of the same size, three sheets of corrugated iron or Colorbond of close to the same length, four rocks or blocks of wood, two lengths of 75 x 50-millimetre timber the same length as the middle length of tin, and 10 or 12 hex head screws. Tools needed were a drill with the hex head screwbit, one big drill, and a pair of (fencing) pliers.

Here’s how to do it. Sort the sheets into shortest, middle, longest. These will become bottom, back and top sheet respectively. Make sure that the difference between the last two is no

more than about half a tyre’s width. It doesn’t matter if they are the same. There seems to be no advantage at all in going for a fat tyre, and some advantage in going for a larger, higher wall height tyre. We have used even bigger tyres for turkeys.

Get the longest sheet and the first tyre in approximately the right relationship, which is with the tyre at right angles to the tin, and drill them together with the first screw. You want the first screw to go into a valley of the sheet about 300 millimetres back from a long edge – this will become the overhang. You also want to join them so that the short edge of the sheet is well inside what will be the outside edge of the tyre, to make for easy and safe handholds. (Check inside the tyre

for spiders if you don’t have gloves.) Two people here make things a lot easier – juggling the dynamics of a tyre that is not quite vertical, a piece of tin that might be catching the wind, and the screw skidding on the tin is quite fun. A hammer and punch to start the first hole in the tin might be worth it.

The hardest tek screw to get in is the first one – thereafter alignment and security is much easier. But the second screw is the most important for the whole aesthetics of the thing – if you get it just right, the tyre will be at right angles to the corrugations of the tin in plan (looking from above), and the tyre will be at right angles to the tin in elevation (looking from the front).

Work your way around the tyre to fasten this first sheet of tin to the rim of



Recycled materials create a very original looking chook house.

For an extra bit of rigidity (and safety when ducking under to collect eggs), we went along the front edge and folded it under about 20 millimetres with a pair of pliers. Don't try and do the bend all in one go – go to nearly a right angle the first time, then fold it another 45 degrees, and then give it a final crimp to fold it flat. We folded the corners over again, just to get rid of the sharp edges. To stop water accumulating in the tyres, three big holes were drilled through

We put the top on the base so there were a couple of corrugations of the base sheet visible outside the curved back wall and, by rotating the whole affair, we made sure there was as small a gap as possible between the 'floor' and the 'wall'. The gap was then blocked with one length of timber placed along the back of the base sheet. This timber was held in place with two of the rocks, which, with the other two rocks, secured the tyres front and rear. The last step was

Gill and I can move the whole system – chook dome, 'ceefee', food, water and birds – in 20 minutes, which we do every four to five weeks in winter, and every eight to ten weeks in summer.

Warwick Rowell is a permaculture designer and management consultant. He teaches a variety of courses and writes about his experiences living at Rosneath Farm, a unique 70-house-site permaculture village/farm. For more details, check out [www.rosneath.com.au](http://www.rosneath.com.au) 🌿

Land for Wildlife has been a successful Victorian program initiated in 1981 to establish voluntary agreement with landholders to provide habitat for wildlife on their properties. By 1995 there were 3100 participating properties covering 319,000 hectares. The program is expanding by about 550 properties a year. 🌿





# The Key To Mandala Gardening

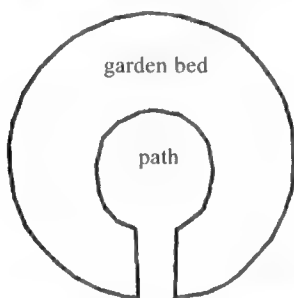
by Dorothy Creevey, Old Bonalbo, NSW.

While reading some back issues of GR lately I noticed requests for information about mandala gardens. As a permaculture teacher I frequently have to explain this design method.

## START WITH A KEYHOLE

Why do we make garden beds rectangular? It's a tiring shape to work with because you must constantly move around it. Imagine, if you stood in the centre of the long side and pulled the bed around your feet, leaving a space behind you. You would now be able to reach almost all of the bed without shifting from the spot you are standing in.

If the 'keyhole' is big enough to fit you and your wheelbarrow in, then with a long-handled shovel (easier on the back) you should be able to reach the entire bed with mulch and manure. Your tools and punnets won't need constant shifting either. Some other pluses are that this shape gives the least path length for the maximum bed area, resulting in less paths to keep weed free. It can also be watered from a central sprinkler if need be.



What you now have is a circular bed with a keyhole-shaped access path. Make the bed as wide as you can comfortably reach, approximately a metre.

## PATHS

In permaculture we like all things to be multifunctional and paths can do more than provide you with a walkway, they can also drain excess water from raised beds and be a useful place to store materials that need time to age before being used as mulch – eucalyptus

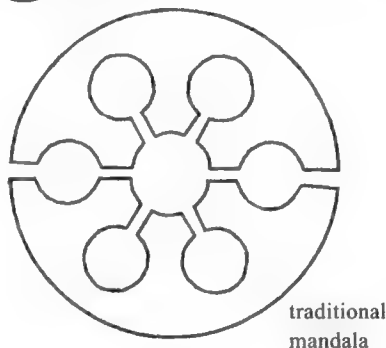
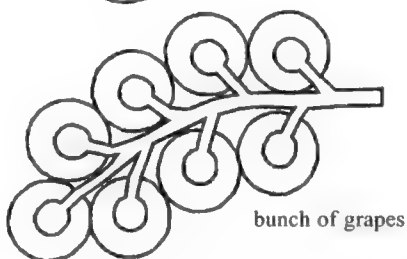
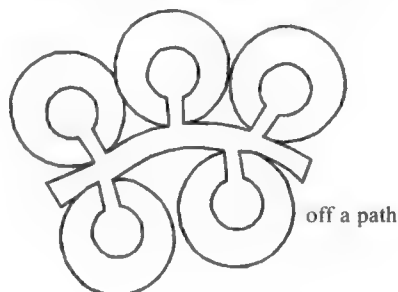
leaves, fine prunings, mulcher waste, sawdust, wood chips.

## To Create A Path

- Shape the path to drain beds.
- Lay a weed suppressant such as cardboard.
- Cover this with a thick covering of a free-draining material that needs time to break down. Pile this on the path for a year or two before adding it to the garden and replacing with fresh material on the pathway.
- Or use a permanent material such as paving bricks, gravel or stone.

## MULTIPLE KEYHOLE BEDS

Keyhole beds can be grouped in multiples to suit your needs. Design the beds into whatever shape fits the landscape. You might choose to have them branching off a pathway, or like a



bunch of grapes, or a traditional mandala shape.

## Choosing A Site

**Soil:** You don't have to choose the site with the best soil. Everyone knows that a no-dig garden can be built on concrete. The only soil to avoid is wet soil that can't be drained.

**Aspect:** A north-east slope would be ideal, but in Australia with our excess sunshine it is often better to have a little less sun.

**Proximity:** For example, place vegetables between a chook coop and the house, or herb beds near the back door.

**Water:** Close to tap or water source.

**Slope:** A gentle slope is best because good drainage is important. Steeper slopes can be terraced.

**Microclimate:** For perennial plants pay more attention to the microclimate. Suit the plant to the conditions or alter the conditions to suit the plant. For example, you wouldn't put a shade lover in a hot westerly aspect, but if necessary you could create or plant a shelter for it.

## Plant Placement

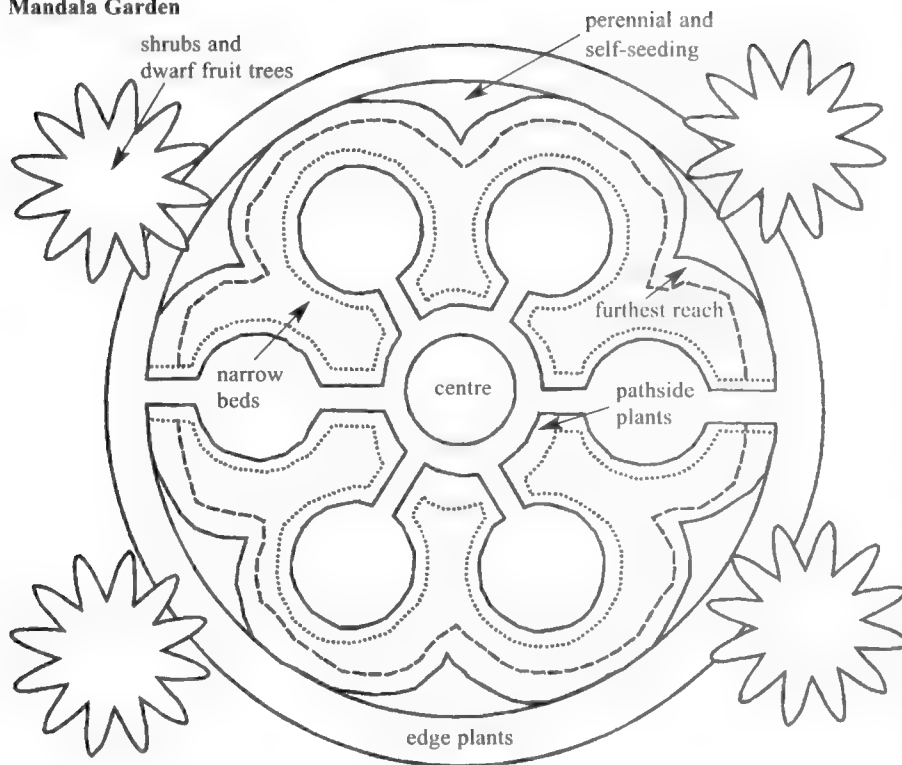
Plants are placed in the bed depending on the frequency of picking. Those picked or clipped often being in the most accessible places and the once-picked being placed in the most inaccessible places.

**Pathside Plants:** Low growing and frequently picked, such as baby carrots, bunching onions, clipping greens, dwarf beans, dwarf peas, chives and other low growing noninvasive herbs, celery, garlic, lettuce (loose leaf), marigolds, chamomile or any other low-growing companion flowers, radish, silverbeet, spinach, strawberries.

**Narrow Beds:** Tall or large frequently picked plants, such as asparagus, beans (climbing on corn, teepee or mesh circle), broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cucumbers (on mesh circles), eggplant, peas (climbing on, teepee or mesh circle), tomato, zucchini.

**At Furthest Reach:** One-pick crops, such as beetroot, cabbage, carrots

## Mandala Garden



(large), cauliflower, lettuce (hearted), melons (on mesh circles), onions, peanuts, potato (put bottomless bucket or similar over and fill gradually with mulch; soil etc), pumpkin (bush).

**Perennial and Self-Seeding Vegetables:** Artichoke – globe and Jerusalem, bulb fennel, cassava, chicory, rhubarb, yacon.

**Edge Plants:** Weed, grass and wind barrier hedge, cut three to five times a year for mulch. Also companion and possibly light shade trees (legumes) in hot areas. These include arrowroot, cassava, comfrey, lemon grass, pigeon pea (dies back), perennial herbs as specific companions for each kind of fruit

tree if they are nearby.

**Shrubs or Dwarf Fruit Trees:** For light shade or frost/windbreak shrubs for fruit, nitrogen or mulch use any of the many dwarf fruit trees; acacias (choose local varieties); bananas (check legalities); bush tucker small trees, shrubs or bushes; crotalaria; fruiting shrubs; leucaena (may become rampant in some areas); palms (choose local varieties); pawpaw.

Plant evergreens on the southern edge and deciduous on the north, so that the latter throw some shade on the garden in summer but none in winter.

**Shade-Tolerant Plants:** For planting under shrubs or small trees try bulb fennel, chamomile, chicory, rhubarb, silverbeet, marigold.

### Centre Bed

The central area of a traditional mandala garden has a variety of uses.

- Pond for insect predator habitat, to improve microclimate with air moisture and reflected light. Could be raised in wishing well style.

- Banana/pawpaw/palm circle.
- With a grill floor it could be used as an outdoor shower.

- Raised garden for the elderly or handicapped.

- Fire pit if the mandala is large

enough to allow the central area to contain seating and for the heat of the fire not to reach surrounding plants.

- Grey plants such as lavender and rosemary that prefer maximum air circulation.

- Herb spiral.

- Compost heap.

- Worm bed.

- Feature plant.

- A suitable site to put a chook dome for an extended time.

- Could be more formal by having roses or edible flowers or an arbour in the centre and pruned herbs or fruit bushes around the edges instead of the traditional box hedges.

### More Ideas

Other plants that could be included in keyhole gardens are compost activators, culinary or medicinal herbs, flowers, green manure crops, food for predatory insects, micronutrient accumulators. The perimeter can be planted to a weed barrier, companions, mineral accumulators, nitrogen-fixing and mulch-producing plants. When choosing plants always bear in mind companion planting and plant rotation. ♻



## VINE LEAVES

When I noticed some friends had a huge grape vine on their side of the fence, coming over from their neighbour's garden, I couldn't restrain myself from asking for a few leaves. These vine leaves are a prized green vegie of the Mediterranean and Asia Minor and an essential ingredient in Greek dolmades, or stuffed vine leaves. They keep well in the fridge too.

To use them, dip in boiling water till tender – anything from 40 to 60 seconds depending on how old they are and the variety of grape. I can't be bothered stuffing them as it's a bit tedious so I just add them (chopped) to stews with lots of tomatoes, grilled and peeled eggplants, red capsicums, mushrooms and heaps of garlic. Serve with lemon/lime juice squeezed over and seasoning to taste. If you feel like stuffing them once they are tender (as above), use them as wraps for anything you like, usually rice and beef mince, or seafood, or vegies, a bit like dim sims and sushi. ♻

**Roberino**



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# Heritage Sheep Breeds

## THE RYELAND

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

The Ryeland is another heritage breed well suited to small acreages. Although considered a meat breed today, Ryelands have dual-purpose properties and were fêted in earlier centuries for the fine quality of their wool.

The breed hailed from Herefordshire and was named after the fields of grain it grazed on after harvesting. Small, densely woolled local sheep were kept by manorial and monastic houses alike and their fleece was so valuable to the English medieval economy that flocks in the Leominster area were colloquially called 'Lemster Ore', the meaning approximating to 'golden fleece'.

Of course, Herefordshire sheep went through numerous changes and improvements to become a standardised breed. As well, during the intervening centuries it was crossed with large-framed fleece breeds, to the detriment of its very fine wool. Some traits remained unchanged, like hardiness, longevity and tractability, and they are key features of the breed today.

Australian farmers became acquainted with Ryeland sheep when recovering in England from the rigours of battle during 1914 – 18. J A Helling from SA imported the first specimens, a trio, in 1919 after seeing the breed first-hand at the end of the war. A second importation soon after, on behalf of the NSW Department of Agriculture Experimental Farm, Bathurst, was recommended by E A Elliott after also seeing examples of the breed while awaiting return to Australia.

Although Ryelands never achieved the prominence of breeds like Southdown and Dorset Horn, their docile nature and ability to do well on poor country attracted a sound following. There are currently only fourteen registered studs operating and several did not mate up their ewes in 2002, so



The Ryeland is colloquially called the long sheep with 'short cuts', breeders claiming their breed has the meatiest hindquarters of any sheep.

new breeders are keenly sought.

### BREED PROFILE

The Ryeland is a medium- to large-framed sheep with a compact, blocky shape as befitting a meat breed. The back is straight, chest broad and fairly deep, ribs are well sprung and there is a good length of hind-quarter from hip bone to dock. Ryelands are polled (hornless) and have dark skin around the nose and eyes and on ears, valuable for cancer protection. They have wool on the face, but it is clear of the eyes and cleaner heads have been selected in recent years.

### Temperament

The Ryeland is docile and tractable because of its quiet nature. This doesn't mean you can put a bunch of Ryelands in a paddock and revisit in three months and they will eat out of your hands – all sheep need regular

handling and attention for optimum manageability. Their temperament is best summed up by the comment, 'You can put Ryeland in a paddock and they will still be there next day'. This docility makes the breed a good choice for beginners. Their quiet nature also helps them feed well and is associated with tender meat.

### Recommended Environment

The breed thrives well in any climate. Studs in Australia are situated in both high rainfall areas of Gippsland (Victoria), and Tasmania, and hot dry parts of the Riverina and South Australia. Ryelands handle cold damp areas well and their dark hooves give protection from foot rot. They also have the ability to manage on inferior or scant pasture, fleshing out when rain arrives and pasture grows.

### Fibre Character

Fleece is considered of secondary

importance to a high-muscled carcass, but the breed produces a springy, dense, short wool with a staple length of 8 – 10 centimetres. It is a fine creamy white wool with a soft light handle. It can be hand-spun, but is most suited to experienced spinners. Commercial uses include filling for pillows and carpet making.

#### Carcass Production

Ryelands are being bred longer and leaner than previously because of current market demand and as a result breeders have found no difficulties in selling flock rams to prime lamb producers. Rams pass on key traits like good carcass conformation and early maturity to offspring, even in cross-breeding.

It is worth mentioning that in trials carried out several decades ago, Ryelands were second only to Southdowns for passing on the chunky body conformation and for the quality of flesh, ahead of breeds like Suffolk and Dorset Horn. Ryeland meat is nicely grained with a high percentage of lean to fat.

Lambs are early maturing and are able to weather a setback and be carried over and finish quickly when conditions improve, an ideal characteristic for small landholders.

#### Breeding

Ryelands are used as terminal sires for early lamb production. In the past farmers have used rams for joining to maiden ewes to ensure easy lambing and vigorous offspring. The breed is considered to have the smallest sized head of the short-woolled breeds, plus fine, well laid shoulders, so has a reputation for ease of lambing even when crossbred.



Looking at this line-up it's easy to see why the Ryeland has a reputation as a terminal sire of uniform prime lambs.

Rams are active and noted for their ability to live and work longer than most other breeds. Ewes are good mothers with plenty of milk, so lamb survival is very high and growth excellent. With good management and feeding a lambing rate of around 120 percent can be expected, but up to 170 percent is not unknown in good seasons.

#### Special Features

The strong constitution and hardiness of this breed and its ability to make do during poor times then recover condition quickly are special features of the Ryeland. Its docile nature shouldn't be overlooked either, as not everyone keeps a dog or farm bike. With training, Ryelands could be taught to come for treats and enter yards without fuss.

#### Association Information

The Ryeland Sheepbreeders Association of Australia highlights many of the traits already mentioned in the article, like hardiness, adaptability, superior carcass quality and use as a terminal sire. They also stress that minimal supervision of lambing ewes is required and that rams mate year round so owners can have lambs on demand.

For further details contact the Secretary, Mrs B Burgin, PO Box 125 Hamilton 3300 or ph 03-5572-2210.

Photos of sheep courtesy of Hallylulya Ryelands, a stud operating since 1956. For information or stock write to Hallylulya Ryelands C/- Grass Roots as the owners were relocating at the time we went to press. 🐑



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# Going Bush, Staying Sane

by Jan Farrar, Kilkivan, Qld.

In my first article, 'Path of the Heart' (GR 149), I shared with readers the trials and tribulations of my first few years at 'Possum's Pocket'. From the wisdom of hindsight my life need not have been so traumatic, nor the path quite so rocky, had I but heeded one or two basic rules instead of proverbially (or is it metaphorically?) sailing off into the sunset and counting my chickens before they were hatched!

It was not exactly a wise move and I suffered the consequences. Had I been stronger and better prepared, they would not have been so crippling to the point that my emotional wellbeing, physical health and mental stability were severely tested. What didn't help was going down with Ross River virus then subsequently suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome on top of trying to cope with my new rural lifestyle. At the very lowest point, after going into a crying fit that refused to let up, I spent almost three hours on the phone, alternately sobbing and trying to talk rationally with one of the wonderful LifeLine volunteer counsellors. I wish I could tell you I remember his name

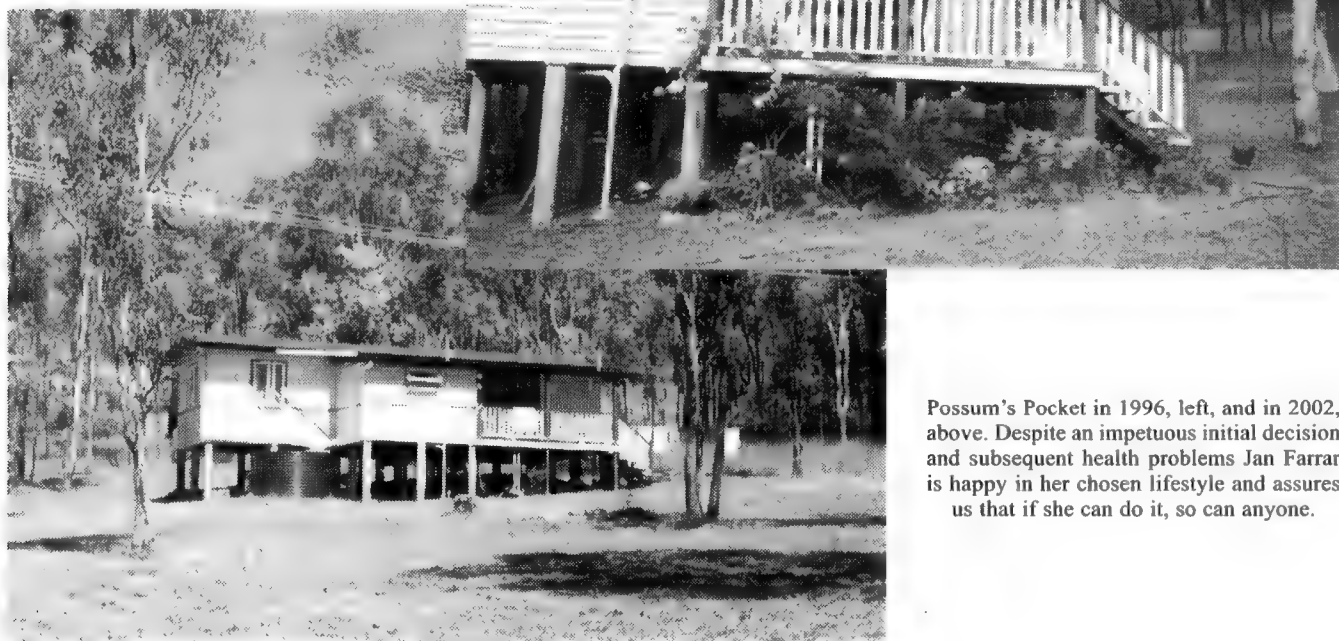
because I suspect he saved my life.

I made it through that dark night of the soul only to be thrown from a recently purchased horse and crack a lumbar vertebra. Then I broke my ankle while walking the dogs one evening. I had to crawl home across two paddocks in the dark. The fracture required an operation to insert a plate and pins and I spent three months in a cast and wheelchair, unable to do anything. Barely had I recovered from that when, on May 19th 2000, after attending the Gympie Show I lost control of my car on a dirt road and slammed head-on into a rather large gum tree!

My Toyota Camry was a write-off. I was lucky to survive, albeit with numerous injuries that laid me up in hospital for five days and which, both now and always, will limit my physical

abilities. I spent months trying to figure out what I had done to deserve such a run of devastating events, since I don't believe in mindless 'bad luck'. Rational thinking gave me the answer. I had left the safer environs of Sydney and was pushing the boundaries of life! Then again, if I wished to become mystical, I could just as easily say that having challenged my rigid lifestyle and beliefs, Life, Destiny and God upped the ante to throw some serious challenges back at me to test my resolve!

I think I passed the tests. Many people wrote to me or phoned saying that they had found the story of my struggles 'inspirational'. Believe me, I never felt inspired at any time and I got through it all with sheer bone-headed tenacity. Today I am just so overjoyed to count my blessings on a daily basis.



Possum's Pocket in 1996, left, and in 2002, above. Despite an impetuous initial decision and subsequent health problems Jan Farrar is happy in her chosen lifestyle and assures us that if she can do it, so can anyone.

Others are not so blessed. It saddens me whenever I hear about some local, fellow 'blockie' (as those with a few acres are known around here) who, having struggled to follow a dream, has finally put his/her place on the market. Exhausted, they have given up the struggle and are bitterly preparing to return to city life. I find that tragic. Their dream has failed – where do they go from here? Back to the limited suburban lifestyle that they wanted to escape from in the first place? Back to a tedious nine to five job to pay off the debts so that, come a Saturday night, they can stand in some pocket-handkerchief-sized yard or on some concrete unit deck, trying to see the stars through the city lights and smog while remembering how it once felt to be truly free for awhile; how it felt to live on open acres far from the city and feel a pure wind on their faces as they counted the millions of stars in an unpolluted night sky and listened to all the sounds of the country?

I have almost been there, but I survived, hung on and finally made good. From this viewpoint I feel I am qualified to offer some basic advice to any GR reader who is now preparing to follow that Path of the Heart and move to the country.

## POSSUM'S POINTERS

### Do Not Rush Into Anything

So your Great Uncle Fred left you money in his will? Put it into a high interest account for a year. Cashing it immediately and belting off into the bush is not the best way to start off a new life anywhere, let alone in some rural town.

### Do Your Homework

I didn't. I saw the 'dream' home late one afternoon the day before I had to fly back to Sydney. The pretty view of the ranges sold the place to me, plus 'intuition'. It felt right. It felt good. Did I stop for a moment to check out all of the essentials? With a plane to catch at Maroochydore the next morning, are you kidding? I violated Possum's first two pointers in a big way.

### Check The Basics

- Does the place have town water? If not, does it have a working dam/bore?

- Do you really need 2000 acres of sky? While it might be nice to consider a huge land/house package, put on the brakes at this point and think hard. Most of the people I know who have given up originally purchased more land than they needed. Unless you are going to breed up cattle or set up a horse stud, what on earth is the point in buying hundreds of acres? Check with the locals as to local conditions – I cannot stress this point enough! Here in Kilkivan, for instance, you need five to ten acres if you want to have one horse or a couple of cows. Any more than that and the land is overgrazed and you have to buy supplementary feed.

- How do you get power? Is it commercially supplied or do you need to learn about generators? If so, is it three-phase power? What do you need to know about that?

- Is the phone line connected? Mine wasn't and it cost me another \$190 to get a trench dug and the line put in. I didn't think about it when I bought the place – I mean, everyone in Sydney suburbia has a phone line!

- How about the weather/climate conditions relevant to the area? Had I done some research I would have discovered that Kilkivan is a very chancy place as regards reliable rainfall because it seems to lie within the rain-shadow of the ranges. Hence, I have had to battle drought conditions ever since I got here!

- How about checking the soil? I didn't do that. It's lousy. The place used to be a council dump way back in the 1950s or something. The ground is hard, compacted and in certain areas frequently 'grows' endless shards of

broken glass. Check out the soil on your chosen block!

- Check out the local services. Is your chosen place within a reasonable distance from a hospital, GP's surgery, dental care, chemist etc? Where I live isn't. A doctor comes to visit once a week on a Wednesday, so it's best no one injures themselves or gets sick until then. There is no chemist and no dentist, so if you don't need pills or have a tooth problem, you'll be fine. Is there a plumber/electrician/veterinarian within reasonable distance? Living out in the 'sticks' often means that you have to pay a callout fee on top of actual costs. A \$50 – \$70 charge is not unusual in addition to the repair and labour costs incurred.

- Is there any access to public transport or a good mechanic in town? In other words, what would happen if your car had a major breakdown?

- How far away is the major shopping centre?

These are just a few things to keep in mind when looking around for a place to live in the country. There are always more problems peculiar to *your* situation than you can stub a toe on somewhere down the path, but if you make allowances for all the basic needs and emergencies, the lesser problems ought to be easy to deal with.

As wonderful as it is, the dream isn't enough. You also need to be practical and rational otherwise that dream might well become a nightmare. Also, I suggest you throw in very large measures of perseverance, faith in yourself, tenacity, plus an ability to adapt, and a total belief in your dream.

This is the lifestyle you want. Do not let go of it for anything. When times get tough, look for ways around the problem and be prepared to adapt and give up certain things to accommodate what needs to be done. Clinging to old beliefs and habits will destroy your paradise far faster than will everyday financial costs.

We are after all human. We make mistakes, but we also have the fabulous God-given gifts of rational thinking, an ability to adapt to whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, and best of all the facility to believe in ourselves and draw on that inner power. If I can do it, so can anyone. ☘

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# Livestock Health and Management

## Information You Need but Haven't Known Where to Ask

If you have queries on any type of livestock send them in and we'll get our panel of experts to research the problem for you. Send them to Livestock Advice Page, Grass Roots, PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

### WORM INFECTIONS

I would like to encourage fellow dog owners to keep the worming program of their pets up to date over the warmer months. This includes cleaning up doggie doings too, because we recently learned that it is very easy for children as well as adults to pick up worms from infected soil. We were horrified to learn one of the children from playgroup picked up intestinal worms as a result of running around barefoot at home. The busy parents had overlooked regular worming of the two household dogs so the lawns and gravel outdoors became contaminated with worm eggs and larvae. Young children unthinkingly put fingers in their mouths after playing with balls or rolling around on lawns. The doctor advised that eggs and larvae can be ingested and that hookworms can cross the skin barrier and so be picked up via bare feet. Don't panic if you have dogs and children, but it pays to worm regularly and to maintain a high level of cleanliness with hands and eating.

**Jenny Crowden,  
CAMBDEN 2570.**

### GOATS AND TICKS

We've just had a bad experience and a very good one. Early this year we purchased some three-quarter-cross Boer


goats. We named them Jazzy, Zeana and Opal. We purchased them as weaners, paying \$35 each. Around the end of August Zeana showed signs of a tick. We rang the vet who said it would cost about \$90 for a treatment and only gave us a 60 percent chance she would pull through. So we decided we would be better purchasing another three goats than to take her to the vet and we shed a tear at her passing after a very short life.

We were offered three kids to hand-raise. (Just a quick note – the best milk to feed goats is a product called Milk Replacer by Barastock, also good for pigs.) We accepted them and told the lady about losing Zeana. She showed us a goat which she had found down in the paddock paralysed with a tick. She started giving the goat a treatment called Led 200 which she purchased for \$25 a bottle via mail order from Robyn Goozee (a homoeopath), 18 Coral St, Maleny 4552, ph: 07-4394-2413. I asked if we could buy a bottle when she was next ordering. The following week we took home another eight deserted kids to hand-raise plus our bottle of Led 200. Some time later the children went down to give the baby kids their morning milk (I was at work) and found that little Ruby had gone down and could not get up. When

I picked the children up from school they told me about it. We collected Ruby, put her in the bathroom and started the Led 200 treatment, 1/4 drop per orally every two hours for the first 24 hours then every four hours until she improved. I also put one Proban tablet up her rectum and she had no water for 48 hours, before giving her a little out of a syringe. This is most important because with tick bites any food or liquid floods their lungs and drowns them internally. On the second and third day it looked like the tick had won, she was paralysed and could not even hold her head up, but we continued. On about the fourth day I gave her a little milk and on the sixth day she started eating again. We had her on a big piece of foam to stop pressure sores and massaged her leg muscles to keep the circulation going. On the tenth day we put her back with the others and she is showing no apparent problems. Goat people, there are alternatives that work successfully, as we have found.

**Leonie & Rob Buckley,  
BOLLIER via IMBIL 4570.**

*Further alternatives can be found in 'Natural Goat and Alpaca Care' by Pat Coleby, available from Landlinks Press, PO Box 1139, Collingwood 3066, for \$39.95 plus \$9 postage.*



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### PLASTIC RECYCLING PROGRESS

Good news on the plastics recycling front is that scientists in Italy have developed a method that allows different plastics to be processed together without the need to separate them into compatible types. Under present recycling methods the different plastic polymers do not combine to produce a stable reusable material. The new process smashes the polymers of the waste plastics in a way that enables them to be combined into new molecules that can be melted down to make a stable product.

### WOOD-FREE PULP

A recently developed pulping process has been patented to produce printing and tissue paper from the giant reed (*Arundo donax*) found in southern California. This plant is considered to be a problem weed that threatens the fragile coastal ecosystem of southern California. It grows about nine metres a year in poor soil, and produces 25 times more useable fibre per acre per year than wood. The paper will be marketed globally by the Nile Fibre Pulp and Paper Company under the name of Samoa Cane. Good news for the world's dwindling forests.

### ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

A recent report has predicted that by 2011 the environment industry in Australia could be valued at as much as \$50 billion. In 2000 the world market for environmental goods and services was estimated to be worth about \$1 trillion. Currently, the environment industry provides about 127,000 jobs in Australia and accounts for 1.6 percent of GDP. Current exports in the sector are valued at approximately \$300 million with significant potential expected for growth. This expanding market presents opportunities for Australian environment industries as mainstream industries increasingly adopt environmental initiatives. The report identified four segments of the environment industry with most growth potential: those associated with climate change such as data acquisition

and interpretation, carbon sequestration and renewable energy; biodiversity management; salinity remediation technologies and water extraction and irrigation management; waste management, monitoring and recycling.



### SOLAR MARKET

Victoria's popular Queen Victoria Market in Melbourne is the site of an ambitious solar electricity generating project. The first stage of the project is the installation of 2000 square metres of solar panels on the roofs of two market sheds. These will produce 220 megawatt hours of electricity per year, saving 200 tonnes of greenhouse gases. The electricity generated by the panels will enter the general grid and earn money for the Melbourne City Council – the market's owners. Further stages, dependent on engineering and heritage considerations being met, could see the whole roof area of the market covered in solar panels. This would make it the biggest photovoltaic site of its kind in the world.

### WETLANDS AWARD

Jointly, Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea have received the highest award from the World Wide Fund For Nature – the Earth Certificate – for protecting important wetlands. The three countries have signed a Tri-National Wetlands Initiative that aims to preserve over three million hectares of wetlands through cooperative projects, shared skills and staff exchanges. The wetlands involved are Kakadu National Park (Australia), Wasur

National Park (Indonesia), and the Tonda Wildlife Management Area (Papua New Guinea). The rights of the local people as custodians are recognised and their traditional knowledge and skills are utilised alongside new knowledge and techniques.

### WASTE WATER IRRIGATION

Shoalhaven City Council in NSW is leading the way in water recycling. The first stage in a complex scheme to reclaim used water and reuse it to irrigate farms and sporting facilities has been commissioned. The first stage will use waste water, filtered and disinfected, from four treatment plants to irrigate 360 hectares of land. By 2004, two more treatment plants will be operating and a further 380 hectares will be irrigated using about 2000 megalitres of waste water per year. By this stage the six treatment plants will be distributed through 74 kilometres of pipeline.

### LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

Some significant data published by the National Land and Water Resources Audit:

- About 5.7 million hectares are or are at risk of being affected by salinity. In 50 years this could increase to over 17 million hectares.
- Some 20,000 kilometres of major roads and 1600 kilometres of rail are at risk from salinity. Could increase to 52,000 kilometres and 3600 kilometres respectively by 2050.
- 26 percent of Australia's surface water areas and 34 percent of ground-water facilities are approaching or beyond sustainable extraction limits.
- Up to 24 million hectares of surface soil, and up to six million hectares with both surface and subsoil layers affected, are extremely acidic. This is between five and six times the area affected by dryland salinity.
- Nearly 19,000 tonnes of phosphorus and 141,000 tonnes of nitrogen per year reach the coasts from intensively farmed river basins.

For more information about the Audit ph: 02-6257-9516, or look at the website: [www.nlwra.gov.au](http://www.nlwra.gov.au)



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

We have just begun our relationship with GR and hope that it will be a long and interesting one. We find your publication to be inspiring and innovative. Despite being city born and bred it has long been my dream to have an area in the country to call my own. Four months ago we were able to follow that dream and buy our place in the wonderful Mudgee area - 25 acres of it, complete with 80-year-old Federation-style house with wobbly floorboards! We are not able to live there permanently at the moment because of work and family commitments, but we go up as often as possible.

The farm is wonderful, but as complete novices we would appreciate any help that your readers might offer as to a few concerns we have. What is the easiest and most effective way to get rid of **LARGE PRICKLY PEAR BUSHES**? We have a small vineyard on the acreage and want to use recycled wine bottles - any ideas on an easy way to **REMOVE LABELS**? Also, does anyone know of an economical way to produce labels for the new wine? We also have lots of fruit trees which we wish to value add. Any ideas of places to buy new bottles and jars at a reasonable cost and recipes to use apricots, peaches, plums, apples, quinces, walnuts, almonds etc? We have begun to grow a small field of **LAVENDER** and I have written a craft and lifestyle book on the subject - any ideas of somewhere to get it published?

At one of the local nurseries the horticulturist looked up information from a gardening book out of publication - by Flemings. I would love a copy if anyone has one they don't need. She told me that companion planting of lavender and parsnips is great to keep away the codling moth from the fruit trees. We can't have chooks because we are not there full time to look after them.

Can blueberries grow from cuttings - any ideas about that?

Thank you for having a publication that is so user friendly and we wait excitedly for lots of responses.

Jan & Guy Bevan,  
2 Kamilaroi Rd, BAYVIEW 2104.



Dear Grass Roots,

I have just finished answering my 352nd SAE, and still they come. I think that if people knew that I was their only chance of getting **TONGUE LETTUCE** seeds more people might write, but with all the seeds that I have given away that might change. I have found out that this seed was introduced into Australia by the American armed forces during the war years, and thanks to coloured pictures that a neighbour got for me off the Internet, I can now give its full name - Lion Tongue lettuce. There is also a Red Deer Tongue lettuce.

When we went away last April I took a lot of seeds with me and arranged for a daughter to parcel up my mail weekly and send it to me. I received three parcels with 22, 21 and 17 letters, and there were 10 waiting for me when we got home. That was a lot better than arriving home and finding 70 letters waiting. One of the letters received in Brisbane was from only about five minutes walk from where we stayed and I had visions of delivering by hand, but the wife was put into hospital so I had to post the letter instead.

At present I'm growing Lion Tongue lettuce for more seed just in case they are wanted. I offered seeds to Eden Seeds and they replied and said that they would give me \$400 for a kilo. I wrote back and said that their letter amazed me because it was my intention of sending them seeds and letting them grow their own.

If all goes according to plan, I hope to have seeds for another lettuce about June.

Robert Winterburn,  
8 Loves Lane, ROSSLEA 4812.

Hi GR Team & Readers,

Thanks so much for a wonderful magazine and the 'mind full' of info from everyone - keep it up.

To Siobhan Smith, GR151: You can make papier-mâché, using recycled cardboard boxes. Cut out the patterns you want and tape them together. Using flour and water or PVA watered down as glue, away you go. Cardboard is solid so it would be easier for disabled hands. I have made fruit bowls, bread bins, gift boxes; it just goes on forever.

I have been looking for a South American '**GUMBO**' RECIPE, or any other okra delights would be excellent.

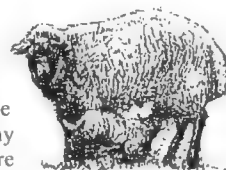
Juliana Harvie,  
PO Box 460, MIDGE POINT 4799.

Dear Megg, Mary & All,

Just a quick 'thank-you' for publishing '**WE RESCUE**' in the current issue of GR. It is such a thrill to see one's name in print. I'm happy to say that some of the ewes we saved are mums again this year and the lambs are thriving. Only thing is the 'girls' are teaching the lambs bad habits and bringing them to the house in hope of handouts. They are not getting any but they do try.

Had a phone call from Pearl in FNQ who saw the article and wanted to know what it is like living in Tassie because they are thinking of relocating. It was enjoyable chatting with another Grassrooter. Also had a letter from Garry Black who saw a letter and wanted info on the New Zealand White rabbits we breed. Hope I was able to give him the information he needed.

Graeme is away for a few days so I have to go and feed the bunnies, all 100 of them. Once again, many thanks.



Betty Ford,

85 Blackgate Rd, MOUNT SEYMOUR 7120.

Hello All You Good People,

Isn't this a great mag? We learn so much from it. I'm looking for help in the following areas. **TEA**: Could someone who has successfully grown and processed their tea please send me a few ideas on how to do it or recommend a book? **SUGAR**: Where can I get a good, hand-operated, small cane crusher for extracting the juice from sugar canes? **TOBACCO**: I have grown my own tobacco but don't know how to cure it. Can anyone help me there please? **OIL**: We are going to try pressing our own coconut oil and maybe sunflower oil. How many psi do we need to press coconuts? What is an efficient way to separate sunflower kernels from their husks?

Is there an unattached lady out there, in her mid thirties to mid forties, who would be interested in joining us in a small community on a small Fijian island?

Bob McAllister,  
Post Office, KILKIVAN 4600.

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

Well, what can I say? The response I had to my request for **RECIPES FOR GREEN TOMATOES** was incredible. I would like to say a big thank-you to you. I'm sorry that I can't respond personally to each letter, so please accept this as my thank-you. Anyway, I have another request. Does anybody know about a good book on brewing **ALCOHOLIC APPLE CIDER**? I enjoy a drop of apple cider and would prefer to make my own to save money and gain some personal satisfaction. If anyone can help me then I would be glad to hear from you.

Sharon Jolic,  
PO Box 62, COOMA 2630.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Mary,

What a great feeling it was to receive my Aug/Sept edition of *Grass Roots* and find my article, 'For Love of a Lemon Tree'. And then as a bonus, a letter I'd written about my home-blended olive oil and butter spread. A truly great day for me!

I've had some copies made of the lemon-tree article, to send to friends overseas, and one copy that is destined for a nurse who works at a lonely outpost in the far north of Australia – her mother will send it on to her in a letter, I haven't met her. I have to admit that I have an additional motive in sending copies of articles to the nurse. From what her mother tells me, the lady lives an unusually varied lifestyle that includes going out on food-gathering forays with local Aboriginal women in the bush. Aha! I thought, here's somebody with experiences that we'd all like to hear about. Maybe she'll write about it?

Perhaps this nurse keeps a journal of sorts, and if she's too busy in her job to get into writing just yet, a journal of day-to-day happenings will be of great value at a later time when memories can be blurred: **KEEPING A JOURNAL**, a kind of 'Ship's Log', is a good habit to have, no matter where we live or in what circumstances, it seems to me, even down to who in the family had an injection for what, who visited on a holiday and when, where did we buy a kitten, what did we make and from what unexpected materials at hand, and our thoughts and dreams too, they are important. And even if it doesn't happen until our twilight years, if it takes so long to get time to write for a wider audience, we'll be so glad we kept a journal and wrote things down as they happened. Again, many thanks for the chance to pass on some ideas from my own somewhat scrappy notebooks via GR.

I got talking to an elderly lady in the line at the supermarket checkout the other day and she spread her hands and said 'Look at these hands'. Nothing remarkable about that I thought – smooth skin, healthy looking hands with gardener's fingernails, clean and cut straight across. 'Could you believe that only six weeks ago these hands were covered with psoriasis?' she went on.

Psoriasis might be better described if I write what it says here in my old copy of the nurses' dictionary:

'Psoriasis is a chronic skin disease characterised by the formation of red scaly patches, situated most commonly on the knees and elbows, but sometimes widespread. The cause is unknown. It may be due to an organism of low virulence and is also said to have some association with rheumatism.'

The lady assured me that indeed she did know what the awful rash was because she'd had it on and off all her life. Until now, that is. So what, I asked, brought about this wonderful clearing of the rash?

**ELMORE OIL**, that's what did it, the lady said. But you can't just buy it anywhere. It is called Elmore Oil because that's where it's made. Elmore is a small town which, when I looked it up later, turns out to be located at site L 11 on the RACV map of Victoria, about thirty-odd kilometres north of Bendigo on the Northern Highway to Echuca. She'd been given a pot of Elmore Oil when visiting family in Shepparton, the lady went on, and although she knows where to buy it in Shepparton, she couldn't remember off-hand the exact details.

By this time we were at the checkout and the girl at the till was listening with intense interest. Her poor dad had suffered with psoriasis for years, the checkout girl said, with little relief, and she wrote down the name Elmore Oil for herself as well as for me (and whoever might read this in GR, I was thinking).

'I'll be going back to Shepparton soon,' the dear old lady told her brightly, 'and I'll bring back a pot of it for you to take to your dad.' I gathered she was a regular customer and often passed the

time of day with this particular girl.

As for me, I'm writing to the best clearing-place for information and ideas that I know of: our beloved *Grass Roots*. So here's hoping – who out there has further information of this wonderful healing agent, Elmore Oil?

On George Negus's program 'New Dimensions', ABC 10 October 2002, the use of lemon juice and cotton wool as a vaginal barrier **AS A CONTRACEPTIVE** and to prevent infections, including AIDS, was discussed, with the women in impoverished nations particularly in mind. A friend, who owned a chemist shop in the wartime years of the early 1940s, commented that there was a product on the market then that was far superior and safer to use than cotton wool. Cotton balls can be lost in the vagina and cause trouble. The product was a small sponge disc of five centimetres across by about two and a half centimetres deep. A fine mesh covered the disc and there was a cotton thread attached for easy removal. Once removed, the sponge could be washed and dried and kept for further use. This is an important matter for any woman unable to afford anything else.

Rather than using pure lemon juice in those days gone by, a solution was made by adding a tablespoon of fresh lemon juice to one cup of boiled water. Before intercourse, the sponge was soaked in the solution and inserted high against the cervix. It was left there until at least six hours after intercourse, or removed next morning by 'bearing down'. Some women made their own sponges, as indeed women have done since the days of ancient Egypt, and the preferred material used was sea sponge.

Lemon juice was only one of at least three of the possible solutions used, others being vinegar in the strength of one part vinegar to five parts of water, or one tablespoon of salt to five tablespoons of water. All of these substances are antibacterial, as is honey. I have read that the women of ancient Egypt mixed honey with powdered acacia leaves to make the equivalent of a disc. Perhaps it was a mind of deep mischief that claimed that these women mixed crocodile dung to this; as though women could ever have been so darned silly.

Who knows, perhaps this AIDS scourge can be stopped in its tracks, and the very poorest of women can protect themselves.

Jane Smith,  
18 Harrison Way,  
Kirkbrae Village, KILSYTH 3137.

*Please dear readers, don't place your faith in the sole use of DIY contraceptive mixtures.*

Dear GR,

Hi! Thank you for continuing to produce a magazine of such high quality. There are always several people, old friends and new, who are interested in articles in my magazines. I was recently camping on Fraser Island and lent the magazines to a fellow camper. This lovely lady was 'really surprised' at the content, quality and relevance of GR.

I wonder, given the contents of the magazine and its principles, why there haven't been (to my knowledge) articles about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Many Elders in particular have a great wealth of knowledge about traditional and modern day land, water, and sky management. It would be very interesting and also build some bridges.

Melissa Graham,  
BUNDABERG 4670.



Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

Alan Stewart's article in GR152 about gardening in the city suburbs is very good advice for most yearners for the bush life. I know from first-hand experience because my parents had the most **FANTASTIC QUARTER-ACRE** I've ever seen and produced half of the family's vegies all year, but Dad was retired and spent lots of the day in the garden with Mum and they loved it, it was a great hobby for them.

I knew all of this but chose to move to the bush for the clean air, fresh water (no chlorine or fluoride etc), less road rage, cheap fresh vegies without the hard work by me, the relaxed way of life, less drug temptation for the kids, peace from noise pollution, less junk mail, less bombardment from advertising, lovely bushwalks at the front door, magnificent wildlife, to name a few. Alan Stewart mentions that entertainment is handy. If he is talking about the latest films, that isn't really an issue because most latest releases are soon at country cinemas (whatever happened to picture shows?), and, for me at least, I wish I had not seen more than half of the movies that the spruikers and spin doctors rave over. You don't have to wait very long for all the five-day wonder movies to be available on video these days either.

Living in the country is in many ways a return to old tried and tested values, making your own entertainment, better communication within a family unit and understanding nature, the seasons, the good old 'early to bed and early to rise' regime, and appreciating the amazing free music of the birds and insects which make sunrises and sunsets such a phenomenon, sadly ignored in city life. I am always amazed when I visit cities, Sydney in particular, how far removed city living is from what humans have been evolving with for thousands of years. No wonder people behave the way they do in cities, when their surroundings, demands, expectations, aspirations and time clocks are so out of step with natural living.

When **THINKING ABOUT MOVING TO THE COUNTRY**, city folk should bear in mind the cost of house heating and budget for it. Away from the coast things can get pretty chilly in winter and some places are renowned freezers. If you have a wood stove going all day, think about 16 tonnes of wood a year at \$60 per tonne delivered, minimum. Then it has to be split, so a good axe or splitter is more \$. If you plan to get it yourself, a good chainsaw is more \$. A good wheelbarrow gets it from woodpile to house because no one wants a woodpile too close to the house because of Joe Blakes, fires, toads, redbacks, funnel-webs and so on. And who has been surreptitiously elected to chop the wood? Gullible old Dad of course.

If you are an environmentalist, or even a little bit concerned, you might wonder where all those millions of tonnes of firewood go when it's burned each year. Yeah, it's got me thinking too. Maybe all that carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and other nasties get breathed in by humans and wildlife

Roberino,

Lot 4, ARRAWARRA BEACH 2456.

Dear Megg & Others,

About time I put pen to paper (or fingers to keys). I have been reading *Grass Roots* for about 21 years now. Instead of my daughter helping me in the garden now, it is my grandson, so three generations now; it is so much fun. We are now in NSW, a little place 45 kilometres from Corowa. We bought an ex-school on nearly eight acres. We have registered with **WWOOF**, only had two people so far. If anyone is travelling on Urana Road between Urana and Corowa, feel free to pop into the Old Daysdale School for a chat and cuppa. We have a power point for a caravan, if you wish to stay overnight. Any **WWOOFer** more than welcome.

I (Dawn) have about 50 different types of poultry now (I'll end up like Megg one day). I love 'em all. I go down and just stand

there for ages in the double tennis court (that's my poultry yard). We have two young heifers also and three goats. Something I would like is a Saanen milker. I bought a Maremma to mind all my critters, she is so lovely. One thing I would like is a copy of **'THE EARLY YEARS'**. If anyone wants to write, please do so, I like penpals. I am near on 47, female and Christian.



Dawnie Tranter,

Old Daysdale School, DAYSDALE 2646.

Dear GR and Readers,

I have a fairly big **PROBLEM WITH MOSQUITOES**, as I am sure other people have. We live in Cooktown, Far North Queensland, and would like any information on plants, baits, lights, zappers, traps, anything that might help with this problem. Also, where I can get seeds for repellent plants? We are fairly remote and don't have a nursery.

Thank you for your time and keep up the great work.

G Knight,

PO Box 572, COOKTOWN 4871.

Dear GR Readers,

I am truly amazed at just how many people either have experienced or are currently experiencing both the many joys or frustrating stumbling blocks, while establishing or once having established their own piece of self-sufficient paradise. There have been many times that I have been inclined to write in and reply to some of the queries, but I have not always managed to do this, especially with two active young children under the age of six keeping me thoroughly busy. I would like to offer some replies and comments to some letters from GR 152.

Marilyn Jefferson's wonderful letter about how she and her husband started their lives together on a small acreage with 'no water or power - bucketing water, kero lamps and wood stove cooking' brought back some memories of how we also started our lives together many years ago!

And then there was the rather sad letter from Terri Hagan who on the other hand, unfortunately, has to leave all that wonderful country life behind because her husband finds that he is unable to enjoy it. Believe me Terri, I understand just how he must feel, because it also took me many years to fully adjust from suburban to country living. I have also experienced many 'lows' to the point of almost giving it up.

I enjoyed the delightful letter by Peter and Rachael Norde describing how they saved both money and trees when building their GR style self-designed house with passive solar principles and recycled materials. It sounded very familiar with many of the things my husband has also done over the years, and is currently doing, to make our lives that much more comfortable.

I suggest that Marie Dybing would be better off buying a twin tub washing machine, especially now that she is on tank water. We are also on tank water and we use a twin tub washing machine. It's a terrific water saver because the water can be reused over and over again, until it is finally emptied out on to the garden and not just down the drain!

I agree totally with Phil Crowe when he asked if it was possible to identify the area in the state in which the writer resides! For example, where exactly are Kilsyth, Venus Bay, Horsham, Sunbury and Wardell? Perhaps, as Phil suggest, CVIC (central Victoria) NQLD (north Queensland) etc, would help readers to clearly identify just exactly where the writer resides. What a good idea!

It's a great magazine, and it's a great read! Keep up the good work!

Heather Golding,

126 Cliff Barrons Rd, UPPER ORMEAU, SE QLD 4208.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

## To the Beautiful GR Readers,

Your knowledge and information constantly astounds me. From obscure seeds to advice on poultry and detailed recipes, somebody out there always knows and I read with amazement every single time. So it is for this reason that I write in with some queries of my own.

Does anybody know of a treatment I can use on my Silky Terrier to stop him from getting attacked by **LEECHES**? We are backing onto a forest reserve which seems to be infested. Also, because of tall trees, the sun struggles to get through at times, so I would love to know what sorts of flowers, herbs (anything!) might thrive under these damp, humid conditions.

Lastly, I'm interested in joining an **ORGANIC CO-OP IN THE GOSFORD AREA**. How do I go about finding such a thing?

To the lady whose curly hair went straight: This symptom is sometimes related to protein deficiencies, so a visit to your GP/naturopath might help you.

Thanks in advance, and to the *Grass Roots* legends: Keep up the good work, love your mag!

**Christina Black,**  
PO Box 648, CHATSWOOD 2067.

## Dear Readers & Megg,

It is a long time since I wrote. I have two requests. I would like to obtain an old **CWA RECIPE BOOK** such as Grandma had! I would also like patterns of items to make with **CROCHETED GRANNY SQUARES**, particularly waistcoats and tank tops. I have just completed a pullover and beanie for Guardian Chemists who send them to World Vision. I knit a pullover (child's) each year for them and usually buy the wool at the end of winter when it is on special. I also knit squares for a friend who sews them into blankets and posts them to a charity that sends them to different parts of the world. This is my way of giving to charity as I can't afford to make many donations.

**Lorna Dawson,**  
22 Joanne St, DEENAGUN 4818.



## Dear GR,

Thank you for such a wonderful mag. I've been an avid reader for two years now and can't wait for every new edition. You have made me realise I'm not mad after all. I'm a busy mum of seven beautiful children so, as you can imagine, time and money are quite limited at the moment. But I feel we are very rich in other ways. We recently moved to our piece of paradise in the Clare Valley. I'm finally living my dream. We have a 100-year-old home on some land set among vineyards; the views are magnificent. I have enough room for anyone travelling and needing a place to stop in exchange for some help in the garden. Please just drop me a line. I just started planting the vegie garden the other day while waiting for the kitchen floor to dry. Started composting and planting herbs. Water is a bit challenging because we are only on tank water and pumps break down on and off. I would love to hear from anyone on tips for **REDUCING WATER CONSUMPTION**. Anyone have any **CHILD-FRIENDLY VEGETARIAN RECIPES**?

I'm looking forward to getting some chooks and considering buying a house cow. My aim is to be as self-sufficient as possible. So thank you for such a wonderful mag that keeps my dream alive.

**Sarah Munroe,**  
PO Box 279, CLARE 5453.  
Ph: 0438-739-345.

## Dear Editor,

We look forward to our next issue of GR arriving by post and the previous issue is always still being read when the next arrives. Often friends will pick up the magazine when visiting and almost always will be pleased to find an article that is of a help or interest for them.

The reason for writing is to let other readers who have a dishwasher in their kitchen know about a wonderful new product that I found at our local Go-Vita store. It's called Enviro Clean **DISH-WASHER POWDER**. The ingredients are alkaline salts (rock salts), oxygenated enzymes (not chlorinated) made from vegetable proteins and organic rock salts, citrus fragrance. The rinse aid is replaced with brown vinegar and the powder is concentrated – one teaspoon only is needed. The product is made by Environmental Marketing P/L, 1/16 Vale St, Malago 6062. Ph: 08-9248-4688.

Another product for washing our clothes that I find works well is Aware environmental laundry powder. An Australian made product and Australian owned company. They are about to launch a new and improved version of Aware **LAUNDRY POWDER** in a bright new box made from recycled board – with the 750 gram box still available as well as a new 1.5 kilogram box. Every time you buy Aware you help to fund Planet Ark's environmental campaigns. Their address: Bionomic Australia P/L, 6 Assembly Drive, Tullamarine 3043. Ph: 03-9335-1152.

A few issues ago a reader was inquiring about where to purchase a new **CAST IRON KETTLE**. We bought a new one from Jim McConnell's store at Milton. It came from the Norvil finery at Ballarat and is called the Lawson Kettle. It is a fine kettle made well in the traditional style and is a quality product that we will have for a lifetime.

Looking forward to the next issue.



**Cecil & Jill Woods,**  
PO Box 594, ULLADULLA 2539.

## Dear GR & Readers,

My husband and I and our two baby girls live in **MARYBOROUGH, QUEENSLAND**. We are hoping to find somewhere to buy near enough to Maryborough to commute to work. We want to have enough space to try the self-sufficiency permaculture thing and to raise our girls without traffic noise and fumes and with ducks etc to enjoy. Does anyone know of a property for sale in this area? When we sell our house in town we will probably (hopefully) have about \$70,000 at our disposal. The property would need to be more than one acre in size, up to any limit, have a very reliable water supply, include at least some good growing soil, and have something to live in. Our ideal home would be brick, concrete block, stone, mudbrick or at least have concrete or metal stumps, but just about anything would be considered. Electricity is not a necessity but a telephone line would be very desirable. A good water supply is essential; with two babies in nappies I have a lot of washing to do. If you know of anywhere like this for sale we would love to hear from you.

We would also like to get in contact with other GR readers in the Maryborough (Qld) area. Is there anyone out there?

**R Wylie,**  
109 Walker St, MARYBOROUGH 4650.  
Ph: 07-4123-0570.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear Grass Roots Friends,**

Is there an **ARTISTS' COMMUNITY** in the **BLUE MOUNTAINS**, with a market where I could go for a day trip? There should be a bus service going there, because I don't drive. I live in Sydney.

Sylvie,

24/34 Penshurst St, WILLOUGHBY 2068.

**Dear GR & Readers,**

I just purchased GR 152 and was interested to read about the 19-year-old young woman (Elaina Conway) who had just bought a house. She should be congratulated for that achievement at such a young age. It is an inspiration to others to succeed in what they do.

Often when reading GR, I see letters from people who are struggling to save up to buy a block of land somewhere. While there are others on the land who are struggling to get something. On that basis I have come up with a little idea for all GR people.

Currently the GR magazine sells for \$5.75. The price of the magazine could be increased \$0.25 to bring it to an even \$6. Now let's just assume that just 10,000 GR mags are sold on each print run. This would be  $10,000 \times \$0.25 = \$2500$ , which could go into the 'Dreams Can Come True' kitty.

People can then write to GR about their needs. The GR staff select and publish three of the requests. It is then up to the GR readers to write in and vote who they think is the one in need the most. The person in the most need would get \$1500 and the other two would get \$500.

Another suggestion that I have concerns GR magazine and *Earth Garden* mag. Both mags have similar concepts to each other. It would be good if the publishers of both magazines could do a little compromise. For example, EG mags could be available in January, March, May, July, September and November. GR mags could be available in February, April, June, August, October and December. This way readers would not have to wait two months before getting both issues around the same time period, as it is now.

Lastly, I am a prison inmate and I am not eligible for parole until 2006. I have ten years experience on the land as a station hand. My specialty is irrigation, however, I have experience with cattle and sheep and machinery. I don't drink, nor use drugs. When I get parole, I would like to have somewhere to live in exchange for work. Any offers would be appreciated.

Jim Faggotter,  
Private Mail Bag 20,

Rockhampton Mail Centre, ROCKHAMPTON 4702.

*Re your 'Dreams Can Come True' idea: We know there are so many deserving stories out there, choosing just three would be impossibly heartbreaking. Also, not all readers would be so sanguine about paying extra for the magazine.*

*Re co-operation between GR and EG: GR publishes bimonthly and EG publishes quarterly.*

**Dear Grass Roots,**

Well, I have just subscribed after finding some copies in the local library. I am 81 years young and it took me all this time to find such an exciting, newsy and intelligent magazine with people who write to find out things they want and people who reply with the answers.

I am a **DIABETIC**, type two. My diabetes is under control, but my feet have a burning feeling most of the time. It is said that the diabetes is affecting the nerves in the feet, but doctors do not seem to be able to rectify the problem. I bought the book *The Diabetes Improvement Plan*. It tells of 20 different pills etc, but I took only three: safflower oil, 1300 milligrams; evening primrose, 1220 milligrams; sulphur 300 milligrams. I got a lot of relief from those three, plus plenty of fish. However, I wasn't too good to walk a long way, then I found that amino acids are helpful, so I have been

on them for two months and I definitely have progressed to being able to walk all around the shopping centres.

I am satisfied if the 'burning' stays at this level. I am far better now and can stand the small burning sensation. If someone out there has a better treatment I will try it.

I live in a caravan park by myself. I cook all my meals in a microwave. I am trying to find a microwave recipe to cook rolled pork and/or pickled pork. I have many books from the local Sunday market, have found out how to cook silverside.

Percy Eames,

Central City Caravan Park,

382 High St, GOLDEN SQUARE 3555.

**Dear GR Readers & Megg,**

About where to buy **AMARANTH**: Thanks Megg for your hint but we don't have Safeway here. Also, my move to Corindi was cancelled. There was an anonymous phone caller from Coffs Harbour who gave me the addresses of three shops. He did make the effort to find out my new phone number. I'd like to thank him very, very much.

As a naturopathic researcher I have to agree with Serafine Nichols that **CALCIUM** alone will not be absorbed by your body. You need as bone food (teeth as well) two parts calcium, one part phosphorus and at least 20 minutes sunshine (Vitamin D) daily on the naked body. Calcium and magnesium work together for cardiovascular health. Don't buy artificial stuff. You can get calcium from (dependent on your blood group) soya products, green vegetables, sunflower seeds, and lots more. In dolomite powder you find all you need for healthy bones, in the right proportion. Most fresh green vegetables and fruits, uncooked, have all you need.

**TIPS TO GROW CARROTS** for Bridie Manser: I had trouble too, but listen to this. Make a flat 10-centimetre-wide drill and sprinkle white pepper, be generous, then sow the carrot seeds thinly. I soak them overnight with nearly boiling water. You can hear the carrots sneezing, ha-ha. Well I guess the tiny insects that like the carrot seeds don't like the pepper. Anyway, since doing it this way I have more than a few carrots. It really works. Try it. After the plants are about 10 centimetres high I mulch very thickly with grass cuttings, straw, sugar cane mulch or any manure.

Stephanie Krockner,

45 High St, URUNGA 2455.

Ph: 02-6655-3598.



**Dear Feedback,**

I enjoy reading every issue of *Grass Roots*, especially the Feedback section. It's great to read about people's dreams, aspirations, sharing and alternative lifestyles. Being a city person, living in the suburbs, I envy the way of life many readers have, and who wouldn't? Having said that, I would like to make contact with people of all ages and interests to learn more about them and the lifestyle they have.

In a couple of years I intend to pursue a change in life, one that embraces a slower pace but brings satisfaction. To find a place to live where I can grow my own food, swim naked in a river, feel the sun on my body and no longer be part of the rat race. To live in a **COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT** is one possible option. Are there people who could share their community living experiences? I would still like to work with children, if possible; the teacher in me enjoys seeing children achieve their full potential.

I would welcome letters from anyone who cares to write. A feeling of being part of your world and a part of mine.

Michael Clark,

PO Box 36, BLAKEHURST 2221.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg,

I've just been going over my mags and came across a letter in GR 150 looking for **INFORMATION ON TASMANIA**, so I thought I would put pen to paper and give you some information. I came down for the day almost 15 years ago and never went back, I loved it so much. Not so much for the towns, you can find them everywhere, but for the people and the attitudes, and for the peace of the place.

At the moment I live in Launceston. Peak hour traffic is about five minutes from one end of town to the other. The locals take a day to go to Hobart (two hours away) and most would expect to stay overnight. Most locals believe that a commute to work is anything over five minutes and that it's too much to expect you to drive 15 or 20 minutes to your job!

The locals, once they get to know you, are beautiful friendly people. It's like it used to be in the 50s where people looked you in the eye when they spoke to you. You trust each other and respect people for who they are not how much they earned last year.

Yes I will agree the unemployment is bad – but no worse than it is elsewhere in Australia – and let's be honest, if you want a job, you will get one eventually. There are parts of Tasmania that will leave you in tears they are so picture perfect. Cataract Gorge in Launceston in full flood is a site that will leave you gasping – it's awe inspiring. Our rainforests are breathtaking. Even Queenstown (in my mind one of the ugliest locations on this earth, the site of early mining pollution at its worst) will open your eyes to what we do to the planet without even thinking.

The price of real estate down here is really good. On average you pay \$100,000 for a very nice three-bedroom home in a good suburb. But if you want to shop around and don't mind doing some handywork you can pick them up for under \$40,000 out in the sticks.

Our education is excellent, with good government and private schools showing excellent results with the students. We have good aged care facilities and excellent hospitals. The price of petrol at the moment (September 2002) is 91.4c per litre, not cheap but not as bad as many places.

Do not believe all the stories you hear about our weather! Before coming to Tassie I spent a couple of years in Darwin and one of the main reasons I came to Tassie was because I heard it snowed a lot of the time. Bullshit! We are no worse than Melbourne. Our summers range from about 27 – 35° C (any hotter and we all fall over). Our winters range from 0 (on a bad day) to about 15 degrees. Bracing! As I said, I've been here 15 years and in Launceston we've had one snowfall, and that hit the ground and melted.

The country in Tasmania is beautiful; some spots like the Western Tiers, Cradle Mountain, Mount Roland or Freycinet Peninsula must be seen to be truly appreciated. You could spend a month and drive from spot to spot soaking up the beauty.

We have great fishing spots. Both ocean and inland. Just watch Rex Hunt to see some of the fantastic trout available. We have some of the best seafood in the world. We produce world-class cheese – beautiful stuff. Our water is some of the purest in the world. I'm not saying that we are perfect. We still have people who do not understand that Tasmania is a world-class heritage area and it's more profitable as a tourist location rather than a means of making money from clear felling! But fools such as these are everywhere; we can only hope that they learn the lesson before it's too late. But that's what the tourists are for. Come and visit Tasmania, but when you go home write to the local parliamentarians and tell them to stop the logging or they'll lose the tourist dollars. They might listen more to you than they do to us!

I'm sold on Tasmania. We don't have any ethnic race violence. We don't have major gang violence. Oh yes, we do have idiots who drink and get tough – but who doesn't? If you want to know more, why not drop me a line. I'll be happy to tell you more. If there's anything I can do, pick up a pen!

Laurel Dunphey,  
11 Alfred St, WEST LAUNCESTON 7250.

Dear Grass Roots People,

If anybody loves **CACTUS** plants and wants to have cactus babies, I have a lot of all kinds to give away. You can phone me on: 03-5197-7208. Have other **SEEDS** too, to give away, large greens of onions – very strong, lettuce, love in the mist, double poppies, nasturtiums, climbing small dahlias. All the best to all of you and a happy journey through life.

Mirdza Kreislars,  
GORMENDALE 3873.



Dear GR Readers,

I am writing to ask for help from any reader who can spare a few seeds of **CLIMBING LIMA BEAN** and **JACK BEAN**. I am willing to pay postage, or can swap seeds from my garden. I have been reading GR (it's my favourite) for many years now. I try to be self-sufficient and keep a few chooks in spite of a recent setback. A fox took all but two. I was brought up on a farm so get used to these disappointments.

V Dunstan,  
12 Cluny Dve, BUDERIM 4556.

Dear GRs,

Well, well, well, so it's finally dawned on our glorious leaders! We have a serious problem. About 26 years ago we attended a film and slide evening at the University of Queensland on the effects of **SALINATION AND TREE CLEARING** in the wheat belt areas of WA. The film and slides showed huge areas perhaps permanently ruined by salt. Widespread tree clearing allowed the salt to eventually rise to the surface. We were astonished and dismayed by the sight and when we left that evening we confidently expected action in double-quick time. Well, how naive can you get? Recent programs on TV, articles in newspapers and magazines have highlighted how serious the problem is, both for arable land and river systems, and how urgent action is needed. Well, in our humble opinion it's not before time, especially now other states have the same problem. However we don't propose holding our breath! Now it seems there is a new problem, apart from the current drought which may or may not be part of the El-Niño effect. That is the drying out of the continent. Let us hope that the powers that be are somewhat quicker off the mark this time with some realistic strategies and far better use or nonuse made of the land than the past 200 years has seen. Australia's soil, unlike Europe's deep fertile soils, is thin, fragile, lacking in some trace elements, and in urgent need of care and attention. We can't do much about arable land, but we can improve our suburban gardens with lots of mulch, poo, dolomite and lime where required.

Alan Stewart,  
2 Weymouth Pl, ALEXANDRA HILLS 4161.

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Mary,

As an old-timer and a long-time reader of GR (although a city person) I would like to say how much I am enjoying Sunshine's writings, especially when she has that vein of humour running through.

Several people have complained about the **RESTLESS LEG SYNDROME**. When I have lemon meringue pie (yum-yum) for tea, or any citrus during the later afternoon, uncomfortable twitching legs keep me from sleeping. Melons are particularly bad too, with pineapple not far behind.

A variety of cancer cures have also been put forward. I would urge folk to read this carefully. I guess I have had 20 **SKIN CANCERS** or more. Most have been excised, some cauterised, and a few removed with dry ice. A strange itch is often a sign that one is growing. One day I read an account of how a woman with a large skin cancer on her leg tried rubbing sunscreen on it and noticeably quickly the cancer cleared up. So, next time I had that strange itch that persisted for a time I too rubbed sunscreen on and, believe it or not, but it shrank to a pinpoint size quite quickly. After a time it itched again, so once more I 'cured' it with sunscreen, but when it occurred again I went to the doctor. I circled this pinpoint size mark with ball point pen so the dermatologist could see what I was talking about! He did not actually laugh at me, but he took a biopsy 'just to keep me happy'. Within a few days there was a phone call asking me to come to the surgery ASAP. When he operated he found the cancer had certainly shrunk to nearly nothing on the surface, but was burrowing merrily inwards, now large enough to need five stitches.

As far as I know there are the three different types of skin cancers and radium weed etc could be fine for just sun spots, but I do not think I'll be experimenting any more! I was airing my 'knowledge' to a friend who is a naturopath, telling her how chickweed exudes this corrosive sap that eats off cancers. She carefully showed me the difference between chickweed and spurge and spurge is the corrosive one while chickweed can be eaten.

My heart bleeds for Julie Holdway (GR 152) as she struggles to get her life back together. I hope she finds a house soon and someone worthy of her love. What an accomplished young lass Elaina Conway is! Only 19, with three children, and growing so many vegetables to keep them healthy! Anne Foarde, I hope you find the nice type of man you are looking for. Marie Dybing: For 20 years my old front-loading washing machine served me well, but then I updated to a small 4.5 kilogram top-loader which uses more water and wears out the clothes. Incidentally, a mechanic told me that a 4.5, a 5 and a 5.5 kilogram machine all have the same sized motor and the same sized wash load.

Would any folk in Queensland (my own home state) or NSW like to correspond? I have had a varied life with plenty of hard work and fun, and many interests.

Samantha George,  
95 Government Rd, NORDS WHARF 2281.

Dear GR & Readers,

There is a job, full or part time, for a pharmacist going at Bunyip. Anyone interested please ring Dinah on 03-5629-5407. It's a nice small town with a doctor, several sports, 90 kilometres approximately from Melbourne and lovely fresh air. Hope someone is interested. There are no late nights or Sunday trading.

There were two letters in GRs 149 and 151 asking about **HERB ROBERT**. Yes, it can be used internally. My reference is The Royal Horticultural Society's *Encyclopedia of Herbs and Their Uses* (ISBN 0-7513-020-31). It lists over 1000 plants and has 1500 photographs. Author is Deni Brown. Cost about four years ago was \$35 – well worth the money. I bought my copy from either

Reader's Digest or Doubleday Books.

Someone was asking about a machine to core, peel and slice apples. These can be obtained from Country General Store, 1/72 Bayfield Rd, Bayswater, Victoria 3153, phone: 03-9720-5258, or fax: 03-9720-5942. There are two types, either clamp or suction. Price \$40 plus \$7 p&h.

Someone else was asking about **STRAW BALE** info. *Build It With Bales* (Version 2) is available for \$45 from Landlinks Press, PO Box 1139, Collingwood, Victoria 3066. Freecall: 1800-645-051 or 03-9662-7666, fax: 03-9662-7555. Get a catalogue as these are freebies.

Shirl Williamson,  
360 Modella Rd, LONGWARRY 3816.

Dear Victorian GRs,

We are hoping we can help one of you and ourselves at the same time! We want to **OFFER OUR LABOUR** (skills including engineering, general handyman, sewing, child care etc) for light farm work, in return for a place to finish off the interior of a mobile home. We are building it on the chassis of an ex-CFA fire truck. We're in our 50s, have been aid workers in Pakistan and Afghanistan, lived the mobile life in Asia, and now plan a simple travelling existence in Australia. We would love to meet/work with like-minded rural dwellers who can help us solve our workspace problem for about three months – Victoria for preference. Lodging not essential.

Margaret Reid,  
C/- 15 Grevillea Rd, EAST DONCASTER 3109.  
Email: moma\_herat@hotmail.com

Dear Grass Roots,

I am a 26-year-old female who has an **INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE**, either Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. I have seen various doctors and a gastroenterologist over the last few years and have had numerous tests. The specialist has told me that I will need to take a sulphasalazine drug for the rest of my life. Currently I take six Salazopyrin tablets a day. I would love to be able to stop taking these tablets or at least decrease the dosage because they have several side effects which are serious. Have any readers had any experience with natural or herbal/diet cures or treatments for Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis?

My GP tells me that 'natural' cures can be dangerous because they haven't been properly researched. My specialist tells me that 'diet makes no difference'. I am a vegetarian, but eat fruit, vegetables, bread, cereals, brown rice, eggs and dairy foods or soya products – organic wherever possible, or homegrown. I will be grateful to hear from any readers with advice.

Catherine (GR 155),  
C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

Dear Grass Roots,

I would like to reply to a person in Feedback, sorry I don't remember the issue number or name but it might benefit others too, re

**FOOD STORAGE** such as cereals flours, breadcrumbs, rice, coconut, cornflour, even icing mixture and many others. Store tightly in plastic first or fold the top of the bag over well before popping in the freezer. I haven't had any trouble with this method. You can take them out again after a few days I believe, if they are not opened yet, any bug should be gone by then, but I prefer to leave them there for good quality keeping.

Cherry Neilsen,  
Pioneer's Rest, MS 2137, TIARO 4650.



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

Re **EUREKA LEMON TREES**: Lemons are like babies, they need a lot of care and attention, with many requirements. There are only so many things you can get out of books, first-hand correct expert advice is always best. A horticultural consultant is a good start for on-site investigation and testing. Any owner with a large property who intends growing a crop for profit should invest in a soil analysis test to make it worthwhile. Test for specifics, for example, suitability to grow Eureka lemon trees.

Jules,  
BROADFORD 3658.

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

I enjoy this mag, maybe more so this time just to get heart and remember you just have to laugh some days (re Roberino's dunny tale). My husband and I have left our home in Far North Queensland, our two acres of trees and bush animals (most released by us). We have rented it out (worse than selling) and moved to a 50-year-old **STRAW HOUSE** on a huge block in town in the Barossa Valley. My husband has owned the house for 20 years and, after years of all sorts living here, it was just a little dero. We got the fire going – what a pleasure it has been, a gift from the heavens. We scrubbed and repaired. It was good hard work and rewarding although I don't think we have been up past 9 o'clock since moving here. We decided to get a hot water system (fire and water – true luxuries), so we got a new solar hot water one. Most excited we were as we drove home from Adelaide gloating to each other – 'free shower tonight, good hot one'.

We parked the trailer (full of free topsoil for the garden) and walked into a small river in the backyard that was pouring out of our little house. We went in to find our painted kitchen destroyed, the ceiling was on the floor, water inches deep through our house. Such is life. You do have to laugh (or open the bottle of rum or both). A burst pipe in your roof can be trouble!

All I do know is the straw house is wonderful in it's place, but under these conditions it's a bit like living in a chicken house. I met my brother and sister-in-law for the first time and entertained with cups covered by hands, to avoid straw in cups. A definite take-us-as-we-come moment.

While the men are giving me a new ceiling and walls, I sit here and read in GR about people living in all sorts of half-done stages and feel lucky that I have met some lovely locals and experienced the pleasure of a ceiling (sooo cold without one). I will remember to be thankful for what I have got, and just love our straw house. This house is heritage listed as one of three original straw homes, and even after such a storm inside the straw is as good as before. So GR keep growing and keep laughing.

Annie & Garry Andrews,  
33 Hanson St, FREELING 5372.

Dear GR & Readers,

I am hoping readers might be able to help: I am looking for somewhere to purchase **SOAP MAKING SUPPLIES IN NSW**. I'm after cocoa butter, and, in particular, moulds to shape and cure soaps, perhaps some method of cutting evenly. With many thanks in anticipation.

Barbara Barnett,  
PO Box 169, RIVERSTONE 2765.  
Email: barbiegirl5@bigpond.com

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

Dear Megg & Co,

Well. I didn't expect *that* when I opened my latest copy of GR. To find I'd become a topic in 'Gumnut Gossip' was a big surprise. The knock-you-off-your-seat kind of surprise. I was at work at the time and really not supposed to be reading my favourite magazine!

Yes, it was wonderful to **DISCOVER FAMILY** I never imagined existed. My dad always believed that he was an 'illegitimate only'. He turned out to be wrong on both counts. I regret that he died before finding out about his sister and family. Family was very important to him. I am, thanks to Ian, now in touch with several of these wonderful people. Although I do think my Aunt Dawn will be a bit taken aback to discover that she has become Ian's grandmother! She's a tad too young for that position! It's been a very thrilling and exciting time, getting to know my 'new' family.

Now that I've been inspired to write again, let me bring you up to date. When Ian's first letter caught up with me, my partner, Bri and I had just moved from Blackwater to our 10 acres in Gatton. The prospect of living in the Lockyer Valley, the heart of Queensland's vegie growing area, had our taste buds dripping in anticipation. Visions of homegrown vegies and crisp salads that actually had flavour danced in the forefront of our imaginations.

Everything started well and we did get a few feeds from the garden before summer hit its peak. All the water in the dam didn't help when those hot, dry winds blew. The thick layer of mulch made very little difference. Between that and the fruit fly, our summer salads were turned into chook treats. Oh well, the girls do work hard and their eggs are yummy. The fruit trees we'd planted and nursed were looking lush, every new leaf greeted with, 'Bewdy, there's another one!'. Then, along came winter and, according to the oldsters around town, the worst frosts seen in the area for over 40 years. The citrus, olive and blueberry survived. Everything else has been turned into a collection of twigs poking out of the ground. Now, with rain being a thing that we, like most of the rest of the country, can only reminisce about and the dam down to less than 15 centimetres, we need to drastically rethink our gardening strategies. Bri is heavily in favour of supporting the local farms and buying what we need. I'm a bit more stubborn, though, and look upon the last season as a learning curve. After all, we've only been here a year, it's just the start of the journey.

Thank you to all the wonderful fellow GR readers out there who share their dreams, successes and failures. Your stories are an inspiration and there are lessons to be learnt from all of them. As long as we hold on to our dreams and keep our sense of humour finely tuned nothing is impossible!

To Robert and Helen Forrester re distillation units: check out your local home brewing shop. They usually sell them for distilling water and essential oils only.

Alex Beeching, re pasta without flour: Pasta is made from only two ingredients, durum wheat and eggs: Without the wheat, all you have is eggs! You could possibly substitute rice flour but then, I suspect, you'd end up with a Chinese-style egg noodle.

Jack Mann, re wooden toys: Go to the Toowoomba library. They will have books on toy making with patterns and instructions. If they don't have what you want, ask and they will get them in for you.

Thanks again, Megg, for the thrill I got from 'Gumnut Gossip'.

Terri Guest,  
677 Gatton-Esk Rd, ADARE 4343.

Dear Grass Roots,

Where can I purchase a **HAND-OPERATED GRINDER** for seeds, nuts? Would it do beans and grains, and how much? Best quality please.

Leonie Santiago Brown,  
92-96 Arthur St, FAIRFIELD 3078



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

## Dear Grass Roots,

How great that this magazine is still going to print and that through it we can 'talk' to each other. I am 63 years old and have travelled extensively around Australia over the last two decades and intend doing so next year, maybe by **CAMPERVAN**. If anyone wants to come too, it could add to the adventure – maybe even a few vans travelling together! With this in mind I shall be happy to hear from folk who would allow me to camp along the way, WA is my destination from the eastern states.

Any further information on **PLACES TO STAY/CAMP** in WA would be very appreciated. Currently I am **HOUSE SITTING** and also offer this service next year if needed. Hope to hear also of other's experiences doing this.

Maryellen,

76 Virginia Rd, WANGANEI, NEW ZEALAND.

Ph: 0011-64-6345-2168.

## Dear Grass Roots,

In GR 153 Linda Richardson wrote of removing the umbrella tree from their block. On a small block I could see the possible reason for doing this, but did they realise what they were cutting down and missing out on? In our area umbrella trees are part of the native flora and grow with maidenhair and birds' nest ferns, with other plants, names unknown, along our creek. When we built our home on the family property, I watched for a season then planted three trees along our back fence. One we see from our bedroom window as day breaks and the world comes alive. Most of the year it just provides shade and a source of mulch for the plants I have growing around it. When it flowers, it seems the world comes to visit. The number of birds that come at different stages of flowering was, at first, astonishing. We now welcome each stage in anticipation, as some of the birds are seen for the first time for the season on these flowers. Many we have our own names for because we don't know their correct names, just that they turn up at flowering. Nectar birds, from tiny sunbirds to parrots; insect eaters, from a willy wagtail to a friendly butcherbird, and a small black bird I think is a little flycatcher because the bees, butterflies and beetles like their share of the nectar. Then the fruit eaters, friar-birds, orioles and bowerbirds have their turn.

There is not much left for one bowerbird who seems to prefer his fruit (and chillies) dried, or the fruit-doves when the seed falls. We suspect honey gliders and a small striped possum also visit our umbrella tree flowers at nectar stage. Maybe I'm lucky. When the umbrella tree is grown out of its natural habitat I'd like to think it was visited by a profusion of the wildlife from its new location.

Dianne Miller,

'Boiling Springs', PO Box 446, COOKTOWN 4871.

## Dear Grass Roots Family & Readers,

I have a pig sty with five- and ten-week-old pigs – and **MILIONS OF FLIES**. Flypapers hang from the rafters along with Vegemite and molasses in coke bottles. I've even tried putting a duck (who grew up with pigs earlier in the year) in with this new lot, but he's forgotten he was the chief fly catcher and runs off. I'm in the midst of reading GR 153 and on page 31, the article on 'Keeping Blowflies at Bay'. I have the majority of the herbs growing in gardens already and will cut and hang bunches this evening. I thought of strewing the herbs on the floor where I walk too. I run a 'clean' pigsty. I have them on organic feed and the floor is concrete. I sweep and shovel all



manure morning and night, put it into buckets with lids. I barter with it, but the majority I put into my worm farms which gives me organic vermicast and liquid fertiliser for my gardens, vegies love it. Then I hose out and the runoff falls into a 200-litre plastic drum set in the ground. I then pump this water out with a small sullage pump onto compost or the back paddock via a long hose with a sprinkler. I don't like using commercial fly sprays and use a fly swat in the house. After reading this article on blowflies I wonder if there is anyone who could send me information on how to make oils out of herbs. I'll propagate and plant more herbs and buy in the ones I don't have so I'll have huge quantities ready for any replies I receive. I'll steep the herbs in boiling water for the time being and make sprays. About four years ago I painted the pigsty – with help – replaced all the old timber dividers with weldmesh panels, so it's easy to keep clean with a scrub. Between each lot of pigs I wash the floors with lime. *Grass Roots* readers, please help me. If I can't build a small still, I have friends who will show me how, help, or barter. Yours till the cows come home.

Lynne Anderson,

'Lazy Acres', MURPHY'S CREEK 4352.

## Dear Grass Roots,

I am writing to ask for help from anyone living in the Brisbane or surrounding areas. All the children have grown up so we have decided to move from the suburbs in a few years. I have spent my whole life going to the shops to buy everything we needed so I thought I had better start planning for our move now. I discovered your wonderful magazine, but would like to find someone who could **TEACH ME** how to go about making a lot of items you have in your mag: soap making, ginger beer, pickling, jams, even basic sewing. Thank you.

Vickie Hooper,

11A Pitney St, CAMP HILL 4152.

## Dear GR Readers,



I am hoping someone will be able to help with information on the **ROSELLA PLANT** (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*). Any recipes for rosella jam and any other uses. Also anything on the loofah (dishcloth gourd). How is it dried to make a sponge for the bathroom? Has it any other uses? Thanks readers.

Greg Nicolls,

10 Bellwood Dve, NAMBUCCA HEADS 2448.

## Dear GR,

What a fantastic magazine! I stumbled across it not long ago and am so impressed I am subscribing. We have just moved to 10 acres (of which two paddocks were partly fenced) and are trying to create a mainly sustainable lifestyle, with a commercial aspect, so I can stay at home and raise my three children (eldest starts school 2003). The chook house has five hens and a rooster. I finished fencing one paddock, for which we have five ewes and a ram, and will finish the other paddock soon. I am getting four lambs. I have grown some vegetable seedlings.

I am looking for advice or **BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS** or anything on **PERMACULTURE/SELF-SUSTAINABILITY IN A FAIRLY DRY AREA** (we have tank water). I am very interested in creating essential oils, but cannot seem to find out how to make them. I'm guessing you'd probably boil them, but I'm not sure exactly with what or for how long, so I would really appreciate it if someone could give me some advice. My husband wants to grow some cork and firewood trees and I am interested in native stingless bees. Hope that's not too much to ask for. Thanks very much for your magazine and your help.

Denise Wessner,

90 School Rd, BALLIANG EAST 3340.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear Grass Roots and All,**

Well, it's that time of the year again! The time of the year where I go to the library just before Christmas and read about all the fantastic things my hands can do. Thanks to GR and your writers/readers, I have learnt how to: make a grid garden (currently in progress); recycle water, and WOW how much water the washer uses; and I've begun to believe that even raising chooks in my backyard would be a possibility! The country girl in me is alive!

After reading GR 152 page 27, about doing **MOSAICS ON COUNTERTOPS**, I have decided this is what I shall do for my counters at home and at our beach house on Ball Bay. I would love the author of this article, Karen Kneale, or anyone else who has specific 'how-to' instructions, to contact me. I'm also looking for chintz-like tiles, rooster-themed tiles or lighthouse-themed tiles.

Another amazing thing that has happened for me since reading GR is that my darling husband has started to get excited about the potential of us making our own mango chutney, which he loves. He is a country boy at heart and loves to camp, crab and fish, but his Yankee girl going bush makes him laugh and leaves him wondering what I will do next!

I would like to thank all those who responded to my pleas for information on alternative methods of helping my ADD 11-year-old son. However, recently his diagnosis has changed. He wasn't ADD at all. With his new diagnosis of bipolar syndrome and new medication (unfortunately a pharmaceutical drug called Epilim) he is a very happy child and seeming to do very well in all aspects now. I'm happy for him that he is feeling better, but would still like to find a natural way of treating this diagnosis. Anyone with any ideas please contact me! Thanks again GR for all you provide us with!

**Shawnnita Fairbairn: aka BusyAussieMom,  
PO Box 250, MORANBAH 4744.**

**Dear Grass Roots,**

We're looking for **TRANSYLVANIA NAKED NECKS**, a breed of fowl that is said to be ideal for hot areas. The climate here is just too hot for most poultry during summer, despite all the shady trees. We haven't been able to track down any northern breeders so would appreciate any leads.



**Steve & Clare,  
163 Druces Rd, WOODBURY 4703.**

**Dear GRs,**

We would appreciate any information on what **HERBS AND VEGIES** we can grow, and when, in our area. I have basil, parsley and mint doing well. We are both from the **MACKAY AREA** originally, but have just moved back after 30 years and are renting a house 40 kilometres out of town.

We have the remains of a huge vegie patch, but are not sure what is best. There are the remains of Chinese cabbage, egg tomatoes and lettuce; all have been attacked by some sort of grub. The chooks are loving these. We actually brought our four Silkies with us, one was only three weeks old when we started our last 3500-kilometre move. I would like to know where I can buy some Frizzles as well.

We have a fruit tree I have never seen before. The fruit looks like a large lush lemon, but is more orange in colour. The skin is thick and peels off very easily; the fruit is sweet with a slightly orange flavour, but also with a definite grapefruit flavour and it leaves the bitterness of the grapefruit in your mouth. The juice is beautiful and orange in colour, and sweet. I have kept some seeds and hope to get some to grow.

**Ailsa Bianchi,  
MS 493, MIRANI 4754.**

**Dear Grass Roots,**

I have just started making a **TIPI** to live in and wonder if anyone has hints that they would like to share and experiences about living in and creating these amazing structures.

I am also studying **STEINER SCHOOL** education and would love to hear anyone's insights, experiences and judgments of Steiner/Waldorf schools around Australia. Thank you for a great magazine that fills me with inspiration to follow my dreams.

**Karen,  
PO Box 118, PAYNESVILLE 3880.**

**Dear Grass Root Friends,**

*Grass Roots* has grown from strength to strength supporting its readers, mainly with nature and a natural way of life. I wanted to share a great experience with fellow readers who will benefit, as I have. I live at Deception Bay where there are plenty of insects and parasites. I had eczema and some skin cancers from lying on the beach. I scratched all over from insect bites and had wounds everywhere. Doctors gave me antibiotics which were not effective and I scratched all the time. I was told about the **MIRACLE OIL** by one of my friends. I bought it to try because I could not bear the agony. The name says it all! It relieved my misery. Wash with salt water, damp dry, apply the oil very lightly once a day, do not cover. To my amazement the inflammation started subsiding the next day and started to heal within two days. No sandflies or mosquitoes got near me so I did not scratch. It healed very well, the eczema cleared up, the skin cancer went. I am 50 and looked like 80 because of my condition. Now I look and feel like 20 with skin so smooth, soft and silky, no wrinkles either. I am still using it once a week. My dog was itchy all over; I used it on her and she is now jumping with joy. I could not believe a natural product, used externally, could be so effective without any toxic side effects. I am so thrilled I wanted to share it with all GR readers. For more details phone 07-3351-5531.

**Ganesh,  
37 Aberdeen Place, UPPER KEDRON 4055.  
To Grass Roots Magazine,**

We have been members of **WWOOF** (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) as a host farm for more than eight years now, and in that time had a continual stream of young – and some not so young – people from all over the world live with us as part of our family for a few days, or anything up to six months. Many of them have continued to keep in touch, several have made return visits, we've been invited to weddings and special events, received photos, cards and news updates periodically, and, while all of them are special to us, a couple have become like our own children. One of these days I'd love to go **WWOOFing** myself, to experience what it is like from the other side. A couple of times we've had minor problems, but never anything major, and we highly recommend **WWOOF** and **WWOOFers** to the readership of *Grass Roots*. If you want to learn more about other countries and cultures and more about your own, becoming a **WWOOF** host farm is a great way to do it. And of course you're getting help around your farm at the same time.

We're also happy to accept Australians who are travelling around our great country. Maybe you would like to exchange your special skills for a few days', weeks', or even months' accommodation and tucker on our farm while you savour the delights of beautiful Kangaroo Island. We'd particularly welcome anyone who is experienced in tractor driving, mechanical work or repairs, or has building, handyman, farm or vineyard skills. Our email address is [farmlink@bigpond.com](mailto:farmlink@bigpond.com) if you want to find out more.

**Lorraine Zinnack,  
PO Box 309, KINGSCOTE 5223.**

# No Matter How BIG Or SMALL You Are

by Sarah Francis, Nhulunbuy, NT.

**We know we have many *Grass Roots* devotees in the Northern Territory, but is this writer the youngest? Nine-year-old Sarah Francis, a pupil at the Nhulunbuy Christian School, describes how her class is making a garden, and learning about the environment at the same time. Well done Sarah and her classmates.**

My class and I are making a garden. We are making compost out of our lunch scraps. We collect grass clippings as well and put them on the garden. We even get shredded paper!

We put leaves on our garden as well as lawn clippings. They help to put nutrients into the soil as well as encouraging fungi underneath the mulch. The fungi are actually very, very good for the garden, that's why we use the lawn clippings. In our garden we only dig if we are planting something, because if we dig it will disturb the fungi.

In our garden we are going to have a canopy, a second storey and a ground layer of plants. Did you know that a tree can produce 10 different things, including leaf canopy for the birds and flowers or fruit that the birds like to eat? The tree produces foliage that helps to replace used oxygen. The tree trunk provides a home for borer grubs; lizards hide under the fallen branches and cockroaches hide under the fallen leaves under the trees. Termites eat dead wood, huntsman spiders spend the daylight under loose wood, mistletoes use water and minerals that the tree provides for them and aphids stick their needle-like mouths into the young leaves to suck nutrients.

We are growing passion fruit at the side of the classroom. We have some palms and ground cover plants at the side of the toilets and a place for the seeds to grow. Also at the side of the toilets there are grevilleas and other plants that creep along the ground. They work as a cooling system for the ground.

At our seed-growing place we propagate all sorts of clippings from special



Sarah Francis and her classmates are learning valuable lessons about the environment through creating a garden at their school.

plants that can grow by cuttings that we get from our gardens at home.

We put lots of different fertilisers on our garden, like blood and bone and Dynamic Lifter. Dynamic Lifter is made from fishmeal, chicken manure and seaweed, and blood and bone is made out of cows' blood and crushed bone.

Have you ever noticed all the bugs that look like maggots? They are not actually maggots, they are beetle larvae. In your compost you can see lots of bugs and worms. Just imagine how many bugs you can't see.

When we went to Mrs Roach's house we got some dead zinnias so that we could grow them again from the seeds. We also got some beans and put them on the table to dry out so we can plant them next year.

I hope this story will encourage you to make a garden. Just remember that it doesn't matter how big or small you are, you can still make an improvement to your garden. 🌱

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# GREYWATER AND THE REGULATORS

by Sally Carr, Nagambie, Vic.

**No wonder there are so many ad hoc greywater systems set up for household use around Australia. Trying to sort through the guidelines that have been put in place by all those regulatory bodies is enough to make many people throw up their hands, exclaim loudly, and quietly work around existing formalities.**

Many local governments, environment, water and health authorities around Australia are becoming increasingly conversant with issues relating to wastewater reuse by individual households. This was unheard of not that far back, but today some state/local governments are even offering incentives to urban householders who want to set up a rainwater tank in their yard to catch rain from the roof for use in the garden, instead of sending it straight down the stormwater drain. This is quite a breakthrough in itself, but the severity of the continuing drought has demanded a serious rethink, and public bodies are being inundated with queries by concerned members of the public who are trying to do the right thing by the environment and their gardens, but finding all that red tape just too much.

## CHANGING REGULATIONS

Let's face it, establishing underground main drainage in urban areas was a major public work that led to the elimination of water-related diseases like typhoid. So, while public bodies can be forgiven for being understandably cautious (read: maddeningly bureaucratic), changes are nevertheless underway due to increased public pressure. In line with sustainability principles, some local governments have made changes to the building code so that it is now compulsory to set up greywater treatment systems in new homes that are not connected to the sewerage system. New developments in this area tend to be state based and are very much dependent on health, environment and water authority regulations. While authorities generally see the benefits of encouraging greywater treatment systems and local government has initiated most of the current water recycling projects, their concerns about health issues and chemical loads

are understandable. Greywater systems involve an element of individual responsibility by households and if, say, bleaches and disinfectants are regularly used, serious health and environmental issues may result. Want to find out more about what's acceptable in your area? Here's some information to help you get started. And remember, only a licensed plumber can carry out installation.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SOME STATES

In New South Wales guidelines for greywater reuse are set out clearly in the NSW Health's 'Greywater Reuse in Single Domestic Premises' ([www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/ehb/general/wastewater/greywater-policy.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/ehb/general/wastewater/greywater-policy.pdf)). The guidelines do not encourage the reuse of untreated greywater in a domestic setting unless it is used below ground, and drainage systems are not to be altered to allow the direct diversion of greywater to the ground surface. However, for shires like Bellingen during the current climate of water restrictions, it is acceptable to use greywater that has not been stored for any length of time to water gardens and lawns. But a bucket or similar receptacle should be used so that water can be applied in several locations; and only bath, shower, hand basin and final rinse water from the washing machine is acceptable.

In Queensland the government supports the use of greywater in unsewered areas when it has been treated and managed on site in accordance with the EPA and local government requirements. While greywater recycling in sewerred areas is not allowed, there are plans to change legislation so that trials can be carried out to test various treatment methods with the support of local government. Queenslanders can find out just

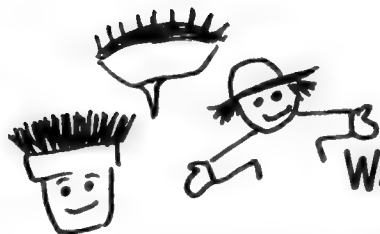
how far the recycling issue has moved along by looking up the EPA's 'Queensland Water Recycling Strategy' ([www.env.qld.gov.au/environment/water](http://www.env.qld.gov.au/environment/water)). It proposes that existing state legislation and regulations which discourage water recycling be amended, and necessary new legislation be considered. Also, proposals to increase community awareness, provide practical guidance and establish workable monitoring systems are discussed.

In Victoria the EPA has strict guidelines for water reuse. 'Reuse Options for Household Wastewater' – EPA publication 812 – sets out the main criteria for establishing greywater reuse systems. 'Guidelines for Wastewater Irrigation' – EPA publication 168 – is also useful. Any system selected to collect, treat and reuse household water must be approved by the EPA and will usually include a wastewater treatment unit and a treated effluent irrigation area. The local council's approval and issuance of a septic tank permit prior to installation will also be required.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

It's worth taking time to research the options if you are thinking about a greywater system. Contact the local council or shire, the health department, the EPA and your water authority to discuss your requirements because they will have the most relevant information for you. The following sources could be helpful if seeking more details on approved household wastewater reuse practices. The Greenhouse Office's 'Your Home' site, specifically [www.yourhome.gov.au/technical/Fs23.htm](http://www.yourhome.gov.au/technical/Fs23.htm) is useful, as is Wendy van Dok's publication *The Water-efficient Garden: A Guide to Sustainable Landscaping in Australia*. 🌱





# KIDS PAGE

## WILD THINGS IN YOUR GARDEN



There are many things you can add to your garden to make it a really wild and wonderful place. Try some of these ways to add extra colour and creativity.

### Wild Plants

Do you have any carnivorous plants in your garden? They actually eat insects to get their nutrients. Two of the most popular carnivorous plants are Pitcher plants and Venus flytraps. Insects fall into the tubes of the Pitcher plant and drown in rain that has settled there. Venus flytraps attract insects with their nectar and when a fly lands on the plant its 'jaws' close and slowly 'eat' it. Carnivorous plants live in bogs naturally and they need lots of water, so be careful never to let them dry out.

### Wild Pot People

You will need:

- terracotta pots
- outdoor paints
- paintbrushes
- soil
- grass seed



Paint pot all over with a background colour. When dry paint a face on one side of the pot. Fill pot/s with soil and sow grass seed into it. Water regularly and watch these hairy-heads come alive!

### Wild Scarecrows

Every garden that grows vegies and fruit needs a scarecrow to ensure some food is left for the humans, not all for the birds. Our scarecrow was born when we never had a single strawberry while the birds were feasting!

You will need:

- 2 pairs of old pantyhose
- elastic bands
- dry leaves or straw
- pieces of felt or other material
- craft glue
- old clothes, hat, shoes etc

★ Take one pair of pantyhose and tie the tops of the legs together under the body part. Stuff the body part with dry leaves etc to make the head and tie it off at the top.

★ Cut the toes off the legs of the pantyhose, stuff a small amount of dry leaves into each leg and push right to the top. Tie the legs together again under the stuffing to make a neck. Stuff each of the legs of the panty-

hose to form arms. Tie a knot at the end.

★ Tie the top of the legs of the other pair of pantyhose as before. Stuff the body part until it is very full. With a rubber band attach the top of the second pair of pantyhose to the top of the 'arms' and 'neck' of the first pair. Your scarecrow now has a body.

★ Fill the legs with straw, tying a knot at each end.

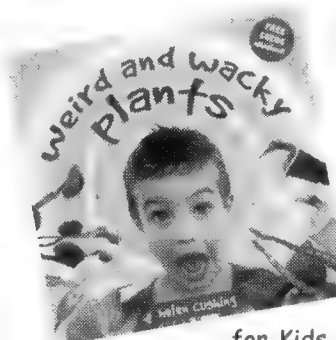
★ Cut out large eyes, nose, mouth etc from felt or other fabric. Stick on to face with craft glue. Make the scarecrow's hair by using either an old wig, wool fleece or straw. Dress your scarecrow with shirt, pants, dress, hat, boots, scarf, gloves etc. Now settle your scarecrow on a chair, against a fence or tie upright to a stake.

### Wonderful Theme Gardens

If you have some space you could create a special little theme garden. Choose an interest you have, such as space, fairies, dinosaurs ... and develop a list of things - plant and nonplant - that would suit your theme. Here are some suggestions for a space garden and a fairy garden.

★ Space garden: Plants - silver leaved such as lamb's ears, strange vegies such as okra and white pumpkins, spiky yukka plants and canna lilies. Nonplant - spaceman scarecrow, 'moon' rocks painted white and silver.

★ Fairy garden: Plants - delicate leaved shrubs and flowers such as butterfly bushes, gaura, buddleia, small leaved groundcovers such as violets and baby's tears. Nonplant - fairy scarecrow with wings and wand, coloured glass stones included in paths, small containers, nutshells etc for fairy resting places.



### BOOK REVIEW

## Weird and Wacky Plants

By Helen Cushing

This little book is from the ABC Books Gardening for Kids range. It describes lots of unusual plants - weird looking flowers and vegies - that kids could grow and be amazed at. A packet of seeds is attached.

P/b, 24pp, ABC Books, GPO Box 9994, Sydney 2002. RRP \$8.95.

# IN THE KITCHEN

Backyard fruit trees are offering us their generous bounty yet again. There's plenty you can do with all those delicious apricots, peaches, nectarines, figs, mangos, pears and plums. Once you've had your fill and don't know what to do next, make sure you preserve the rest of your harvest by freezing, bottling, drying or pickling.

Whether poached or baked, combined to make yummy cakes, used as a base in crumbles, or put with pastry to make tarts, these fruits always taste great and are probably at their best when served in an unadulterated simple fashion. Try out these quick recipes below, come up with your own ideas, or let us know your all-time favourites.

## BAKED FIGS IN RED WINE

- 90 g butter
- 6 tbsp honey
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup red wine
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 12 ripe figs, halved

Heat oven to 180° C. Melt butter and honey, add wine and cinnamon. Place figs snugly, cut side down, in an ovenproof dish, and tip the syrup over them. Place in the oven for 15 minutes or so.

## SPICY PLUM TART

- 250 g sweet shortcrust pastry
- 300 g sour cream
- 3 egg yolks
- 2 tbsp caster sugar
- 1 tsp allspice
- 500 g ripe dessert plums, halved with stones removed
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup raw sugar
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon

Preheat oven to 200° C. Roll out pastry to line a greased 22-centimetre flan tin. Beat sour cream, sugar, egg yolks and allspice. Pour mixture into pastry case. Top with plums, cut side up. Bake for 20 minutes then mix cinnamon with raw sugar and sprinkle over top of tart. Bake for 20 minutes more, turning heat up to 220° C for the last five minutes to brown up the top.

## POACHED PEARS

- 4 cups water
- 2 cups caster sugar
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 6 cloves

- vanilla bean
- 6 pears, peeled but stalks intact

Bring water and sugar to simmer, add lemon zest, juice and vanilla bean. Stud each pear with a clove and place pears upright in saucepan. Cover and simmer very gently until pears are tender – this can take up to two hours depending on variety and ripeness, but the longer the better. Best served at room temperature.

## ROAST NECTARINES

- 6 nectarines, halved with stones removed
- 1 cup sugar
- butter

Heat oven to 200° C. Place nectarines cut side up in a greased ovenproof dish so that they fit tightly. Sprinkle each half with a tablespoon of sugar, dot with butter and bake for 20 minutes.



## PEACH AND MANGO FOOL

- 3 ripe peaches, peeled and sliced
  - 2 mangos, peeled and sliced
  - 2 tbsp honey
  - 1 tsp ground ginger
  - 250 g plain yoghurt
  - 140 g light sour cream
  - $\frac{1}{4}$  cup toasted flaked almonds
- Place peaches, mangos, honey and

ginger in food processor and blend until smooth. Fold in the yoghurt and sour cream, then spoon into serving dish or individual serving glasses. Refrigerate for 30 minutes and top with toasted almond flakes before serving.

## APRICOT CRUMBLE

- 2 cups poached apricot
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups plain flour
- 60 g butter
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup caster sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp ground ginger

Heat oven to 190° C and place fruit in ovenproof dish. Make a crumble by rubbing the flour and butter together with fingers then adding other ingredients. Add crumble topping to fruit and bake until it is golden on top.

## MANGO AND ALMOND CAKE

- 3 mangos, peeled and diced
- 250 g butter, softened
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups plain flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking powder
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- icing sugar

Heat oven to 180° C and grease 22-centimetre baking tin. Purée enough mango flesh and juice to make 1 cup of fruit. Put aside remaining diced mango. Beat butter and sugar till thick and pale. Add vanilla essence and eggs one at a time, while beating well. Add baking powder and flour to batter, plus 1 cup of toasted almonds. Mix well before gently folding in the mango purée. Place mixture in prepared tin, top with remaining almonds and mango flesh and swirl through. Bake for one hour or until cooked. Cool in tin before removing cake and dredging with icing sugar. ♡

# Weed Cuisine

by Gael Murray, Taree, NSW.

An old Feedback letter set me thinking on weeds. Yes, fancy anyone calling our wild plants weeds. Despite the fact that most gardeners will regard them as pests, they do have good uses.

Weeds is a collective word, to be used in much the same way as vegetables and flowers. These plants can contribute so much, not only to mankind, but also to the general maintenance of the soil. If we don't wish to use them for a food or medicinal purpose, or in floral arrangements, the full use of their valuable nutrients can be gained through recycling back into the garden. Composting them with other primary sources produces a very valuable asset in any garden.

In some cases it can be difficult to define what is weed and what is herb. But whether they grow wild or are controlled in garden beds, many plants that we consider weeds are our friends.

These versatile plants – please not weeds – now have vast quantities written about their qualities and use. Modern technology has given us so much in the way of storing information – via books, the Internet, newspapers, radio and TV. Easy access to all these avenues is there for us to utilise in learning about plants.

The type of wild plants available depends on the area you live in. Most areas would include plants such as dandelions, daisies, buttercups, ivy, clover, grasses and nettles.

If you have access to a supply of pine needles, they make an excellent mulch for strawberries. Nasturtiums prolific growers that look pretty in flower – do a valuable job in keeping away pests such as aphids and white butterflies. They are good near any apple tree.

Chickweed is a winter annual with a rich copper content. This versatile plant was once hawked in streets and sold in bundles to make salads. For use as a vegetable, it can be combined with shallots or onions. Drain off any excess

water, add a knob of butter and season with salt and pepper. A squeeze of lemon juice adds piquancy. Be careful not to burn this combination in the cooking process.

Clover is a very adaptable plant that grows readily everywhere. Red and white clover are natives of Europe, but wherever it grows it will remain a favourite foraging ground for bees. Try these 'weed cuisine' recipes from wild plants available in your area.

## BLACKBERRY JAM

The first blackberries to be grown in Australia were brought here from



Europe in 1891 and cultivated in Tasmania. Swagmen and pioneers helped distribute them by planting them for a source of food. A thornless, less 'weedy' variety has now been produced.

1 kg blackberries (fresh if possible)  
1 kg sugar  
juice of two lemons

Simmer the berries and lemon juice for 20 minutes and stir well. Add sugar and bring slowly to the boil, stir often until it gels. Pour into hot clean jars and seal.

## NASTURTIUM MAYONNAISE

Nasturtiums thrive in poor, dry land. They belong to the watercress family and, because they have an antibiotic action, they are a worthy inclusion in our culinary efforts as often as possible.

24 nasturtium blossoms  
250 g mayonnaise  
6 tsp cream

Place all ingredients in an electric blender and whirl at high speed for one minute. Place in a jar and store in the refrigerator until ready for use.

## PICKLED NASTURTIUM SEEDS

Soak the seeds in brine, made from 1 heaped tablespoon of salt dissolved in

1½ cups of water. Use only enough brine to just cover the seeds. Change the brine every day for three days. Rinse seeds well. Put in a jar and cover with either white wine or vinegar. Leave for 5 – 6 weeks before using.



## PRESERVED NASTURTIUMS

This method can be used for flowers and leaves that are to be used as a garnish. They will store for a short while between layers of greaseproof paper in an airtight tin.

Beat an egg white with a pinch of salt. Don't overbeat, it should be just broken down. Brush clean, dry flowers and leaves with the egg white, using a fine paint brush. Sprinkle with castor sugar and place on greaseproof paper. Set oven to lowest heat and dry on bottom shelf, with the door open, for 20 - 30 minutes.



## STINGING NETTLE PORRIDGE OR PUDDING

Best eaten with a hot dinner. Boil a small teacup of barley until soft and mix with the following washed and finely chopped ingredients:

6 handfuls young nettle leaves  
1 handful dandelion leaves  
small bunch watercress  
small bunch sorrel leaves  
8 blackcurrant leaves  
1 onion  
sprig mint  
spray thyme



Season lightly with salt and pepper and add a teaspoonful of butter. Mix all together with a well-beaten egg and put mixture in a basin. Cover and steam for 1½ hours. Serve with a rich gravy.

#### CLOVER WINE

4.5 lt flowers, red or white or both  
4.5 lt water  
30 g yeast  
3 lemons  
2 oranges  
1.5 kg white sugar

Boil the sugar and water for a few minutes to make a light syrup, then allow to cool. When lukewarm take out a cupful and crumble in the yeast. Stir it a little and let it work until it makes a creamy liquid. Meantime, put the flowers, the thin yellow peel (no white pith) of the fruits, and the juice, into the fermenting vessel.

Pour in the cooled syrup and the creamed yeast. Cover the vessel with a folded cotton cloth and leave it in a warm room for five days. Stir it twice daily with a wooden spoon.

Strain contents of the vessel through a colander into a clean vessel such as a plastic bucket. Then strain liquid again over a large jug through a fine sieve or a colander with several butter muslin thicknesses to trap the remaining sediment.

The clear liquid is ready to be poured through a nonmetal funnel into a glass fermentation jar and lightly sealed. Clear glass allows you to see how the wine behaves. Shops that sell wine making equipment can help with the necessary equipment.

Keep the fermentation jar in a

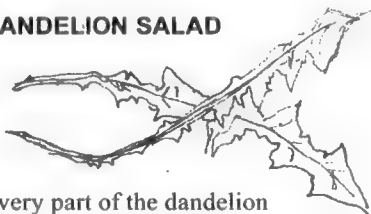
warm room, or where there is an even temperature, for three weeks. It is then ready to move to a cooler place for another fortnight or longer until the bubbles do not rise to the surface when moved.

The sediment must now be removed or it will spoil the wine. Keep repeating the removal of sediment each time it settles until liquid is clear. This will probably take a couple of weeks. Then it is ready for bottling. Perfect clearing takes about four months.

Any good thick wine bottles are suitable, preferably with indented bases. Thoroughly clean and sterilise bottles before use.

Use straight-sided corks softened in boiling water. Store the bottles in a cool dark place on their sides. Wrap paper around them to keep out the light. Let the wine mature for about a year and it will be delicious.

#### DANDELION SALAD



Every part of the dandelion plant is edible. The leaves are a wonderful addition to salads, the blossoms make wine and the roots have been used as a coffee substitute.

½ cup dandelion flower buds, unopened

1 bunch young dandelion leaves

2 rashers bacon

2 tbsp apple cider vinegar and oil dressing

Wash dandelion flowers and leaves,

and dry between paper towels. Fry bacon rashers in pan until crisp. Remove bacon and drain. Toss dandelion flowers into the bacon fat and cook till buds burst open. Crumble bacon into salad bowl. Add dandelion leaves and flowers. Pour over dressing and toss lightly. ♣

#### CANCER INFLUENCE

A study of 44,788 pairs of twins conducted by scientists in Sweden, Denmark and Finland found that environmental influences and lifestyle choices are more likely to determine cancer risk than genetic inheritance. Prostate cancer was most likely to be inherited for 42 percent, but on average genetic factors account for 30 percent of cancers. The balance of cancer risk has more to do with eating habits, smoking, drinking and environment. ♣



#### NOT ALL FATS ARE BAD

Even when we're making an effort to eat sensibly or lose weight, not all fats can be lumped together under the 'no-go' list. Steer clear of hydrogenated fats, like those found in biscuits, chocolate, margarine and confectionary. Many commercially produced foods contain saturated fats and refined vegetable oils. These, too, should be avoided. But monounsaturated fats are fine to eat and help to lower cholesterol. These include foods like salmon, tuna, sardines, olive oil, flaxseed, avocados, raw nuts and canola oil. ♣



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# Under The Shade Of The Old Clothes Hoist

by Jose Robinson, Noosaville, Qld.

When my five children were all young we held many outdoor birthday parties under the shade of the rotary clothes hoist, using my homemade cotton clothes hoist cover as a giant umbrella. The birthdays happen to be all within a few weeks of each other, near the end of the year, so usually the parties were a combination of several birthday celebrations at the one time.

I made the strong coloured cotton clothes hoist cover in four segments, each a different bright colour, and to the exact size of the clothes hoist. It had deep scallops bound in white all around the perimeter (like a beach umbrella) and I used ties to keep it in place.

During the heat of last summer I suddenly had the need to provide shade for a straw bale workshop that I was holding at home for approximately 30 participants. Having only lived at our new location for 21 months, the shade trees I'd planted on our bare block were still in their infancy so were useless for shade.

I got to wondering whatever happened to the rotary clothes hoist cover I'd made so long ago. I must have tossed it out or given it away to somebody years ago. I felt the cost of the quantity of new fabric I'd require to make another one would be prohibitive now, with the price of suitable strong fabric so expensive, so I began to look around the op shops for suitable curtains which I could cut up to do the job. In just two different op shops I found exactly what I needed. One lot of curtains were a blue/green/navy tartan design which was sufficient to make two segments of the clothes hoist cover. At the second op shop I found four strong cotton curtains in a wonderfully bright mixed colour combination in a quality fabric by the well known designer Ken Done. I couldn't believe my good luck. The curtains were thick and in good condition. I'd



A fabric clothes hoist cover makes a useful sun or rain shelter.

already measured the clothes hoist so I knew this curtain fabric would be sufficient, even though I'd have to make a couple of extra joins.

## MAKING IT UP

Now for the fun of making it up. I'll set this out step by step so interested readers who wish to make a similar cover can follow my pattern.

### Step 1

The average rotary clothes hoist has four segments so it's only necessary to measure one of these and multiply by four to get the total metreage required. Don't forget to allow extra for seams.

Wind your hoist down as far as it will go and lock it in, so if it is a windy day, you can't get beheaded. Standing on a box, or whatever, run your tape measure from the apex down one pipe to the extreme outer point. Write this measurement down. (Mine was 300 centimetres.) Next measure the outermost wire which runs from the tip of one segment pipe to the next. (Mine was 420 centimetres.) Now draw the

triangle on your notepad, filling in these three measurements. The two sides from the apex will be the same.

### Step 2

Place your fabric down on a large clear floor space; no table will be of sufficient size. Next mark out your measurements of the triangle with pins or marker pen, using a tape or straight edge to keep your line straight. If your fabric is not large enough, it should be pinned and stitched before you mark out the triangle.

### Step 3

Cut the first triangle carefully, allowing for seams on the two sides meeting at the apex. If you want a lapover or a scalloped edge around the perimeter, now is the time to allow 15 centimetres extra on that edge.

### Step 4

You're over the hard part now and the rest is plain sailing. Cut the remaining three segments identical to the first one and sew all four segments together. I stitched a small round double piece on the underside of the apex for extra strength.

If you are using contrasting colours or mix and match colours, take care to stitch them up in the order you desire. Opposites (that is two of each colour) look nice used alternately.

### Step 5

I sewed two sets of four tapes to the undersides. One set I stitched securely 30 centimetres from the apex, the next set approximately halfway along. The outer edge can have lots of short tapes to secure, or you can do as I did and simply peg it to the outer line using lots of clothes pegs.

We had rain showers and wind on the two days of my straw bale workshop and the clothes hoist cover passed muster by the group with flying colours. The total cost for the clothes hoist cover was \$8 for all the second-hand fabric plus sewing cotton. ☘

# I Wish Someone Had Told Me About . . . Visitors

by Dianne Warren, Maroon, Qld.

When I say 'visitors', they could probably be classed into two categories – the human kind and the nocturnal.

Now don't get me wrong, I love having people to visit. There's no greater pleasure than sitting down, sharing a meal and a nice Chardonnay and catching up on news. Working for ourselves, however, these social events are usually planned and slotted in between work commitments. We have been known to be wildly spontaneous and drop everything, but, for the most part, when the work's done then we play.

Autumn through to spring is a particularly busy time for us with our vegetable and herb growing, but unfortunately it also seems to be high season for visitors heading to our sunny shores for some holiday fun. Sometimes I think we should hang a motel sign outside and charge for the privilege. Funny, when we lived in the suburbs I don't recall being in such demand, or our social calendar being as full. Apart from our gracious hospitality, I have a sneaking suspicion that our lovely northern climate and charming little country home may have something to do with our new-found popularity!

Some of our more energetic visitors are a complete joy, make little demand, love mucking in and helping with the numerous day-to-day chores or the

project of the moment. Others are just plain intrusive and expect us to entertain them as part of their holiday fun and can't quite grasp why we can't just drop everything, take off on a whim and spend loads of money viewing tourist attractions that I have no desire to see. These are the visitors that I dread and help pack their bags at the end of their, usually lengthy, stay. So much for being lonely and isolated!

The other sort of visitors that give me a headache are the furry sort that come out at night and feast on my vegies. The main culprits are bandicoots and possums. When I lived in the suburbs, snails were our worst enemy, but nothing compared to these vermin.

Our first couple of years here, all was well. Our vegies flourished and remained relatively untouched by the assorted beasties. One day the word must have got out that our gardens were a veritable five star gourmet treat. Beds that were newly planted out would be dug up every morning and leafy greens chewed to the ground. This season I've lost track of how many times I've planted out the vegie garden; even lettuce seedlings growing out of their reach, or so I thought, and covered at night were fair game. Goodness knows how many times I've planted zucchini and corn seeds, only to find them gone the next day. At one point we used to put upturned pots over seedlings, but of course when the plants grew, we had to find bigger pots. With quite an extensive growing area, this was an unbelievable chore. We've resigned ourselves to the fact that our plants are just going to take their chances and I'm no longer crazed with frustration.

Bandicoots, cute as they may look, are experts at leaving great gaping holes in the soil where they've been digging to China. They seem to favour the soft, moist loam in the vegie garden. Root crops therefore have to be



guarded like Fort Knox. Pity you can't direct their energetic efforts to parts of the garden where you'd actually like a few holes dug!

Apart from the garden terrorism, another of the possums' habits is taking up residence right where you don't want them so you find urine and droppings everywhere the next morning. One of our more daring possums has taken to sneaking into the house through open windows, which to us is going beyond a joke. Our three-year-old daughter went through some sleeping problems, afraid of nighttime bogies and the like. After much reassurance and checking of windows, the phase passed until a possum leapt through her window one night onto her head!

Oh, and then there's their endearing habit of racing across the roof at four in the morning waking up the whole household. We curse and grumble about them, but, really, I think we've just resigned ourselves to the fact that they're a part of country living. As with living next to a train station, after awhile you just get used to it and turn a deaf ear.

I'm not sure if we've outsmarted the critters yet, they've probably got a few more tricks up their sleeves, but for now we've called a truce. As for our other visitors, when the holiday season comes around again, maybe we'll have the 'no vacancy' sign burning bright! ♡

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# Options For Drought Feeding

by June Birkett, Crystal Creek, NSW.

**Dairy farmer June Birkett outlines strategies that she uses when drought affects cattle on her property in northern New South Wales.**

Worldwide, weather patterns are changing, droughts are ever more frequent and devastating. With these patterns becoming more common farmers need to have in place emergency plans for such times.

It is essential to look at feeding options for cattle to keep them in good condition. Some of these options might not be possible in all areas, but all options should be considered.

## FIRST STEPS

### Culling

Any older or defective cattle should be culled and sold off. Decide how many cattle you can feed and work with this number. There's no point in spending good money on feeding cattle that will not bring financial gain later or spend long periods dried off without milk.

### Professional Advice

Never panic. Take time to consider all options and do not be frightened to try any. If worried about any sort of feeding program, contact your local agriculture department to help with more details and give you professional advice relevant to your area.

## FEED OPTIONS

### Hay or Silage Making

Even the roughest grasses are at least fill for cattle and can be made into silage or hay bales, but minerals must be given to cattle by pellet feed or cattle lick.

### Hay or Silage Purchases

Look in the rural papers, ask rural or estate agents, or ask around your own area for hay merchants.

### Molasses

If you are able to obtain molasses to supplement your cattle feed, it is an excellent buy. It's high in energy and stock can eat as much as they can hold without any detrimental effects.



Stock are bound to get down in condition during a drought but look at the feed options available when pasture or grass runs out.

### Agistment

Look in the papers, check local unused paddocks, ask rural stores, estate agents, or farmers. As long as there is water, any paddocks are a help to tide stock over the drought until the rains come.

### Dairy Meals or Pellets

These are more expensive feeds, but meal with minerals added will keep cattle in good condition if you can afford it.

### The Long Paddock

In certain areas the cattle can be run along the side of the road, as long as they are supervised by an attendant. For short stretches an electric fence, with a supervisor, can be useful. Remember, if a cow gets hit on the road the cost in insurance can be huge. Lock up your own paddocks when they're not in use to conserve the growing feed.

### Sugar Cane Mulch

If you are in an area where sugar cane tops are available or can be purchased, the tops can be made into bales. The

cane itself can be rough cut and made into silage. Cattle love green tops or silage made of cane.

### Cotton Seed Feed

Cotton seed is an excellent feed for cattle and keeps them in good condition. If not too expensive and it can be bought, it will keep cattle healthy over a difficult time.

### Stale Bread or Rejects

Approach a bakery and purchase the stale bread or their throwaways. Cattle readily eat the bread, but use it only as a supplement.

### Fruit and Vegetables

Any reject bananas or citrus, or any fruit, can be fed to cattle. Pumpkin, turnip, or any other vegetables, are readily eaten and are an excellent feed, usually not requiring mineral supplementation. Vegetables keep cattle in good condition.

### Peanuts

In areas of peanut growing the tops of the plants, or the nuts themselves, are

happily accepted by cattle. Just do not stand too close for a couple of days as the gas might overpower you.

## OTHER STRATEGIES

### Quick Feed

If even a small amount of rain falls, put urea immediately on the wet areas to help push up a quick feed. Do the same on irrigated areas.

### After the Drought

When eventually the drought breaks, confine animals to let the pasture get away, then re-introduce them to the green paddocks slowly. Solid green feeding after so much dry feed can take a toll on the herd.

GR 87 had an article on feeding stock through a dry season, especially relevant to smallholders. In GR 111 there was an article on drought planning and management, for farm and garden. See page 82 for details on how to order back copies. ♣

## DIATOMACEOUS EARTH

While diatomaceous earth is a very effective natural pest control, the swimming pool grade should not be used on the garden. Though both the swimming pool grade and natural diatomaceous earth come from the same fossil sources, they are produced differently. The pool grade is chemically treated and partially melted leaving crystalline silica which can cause respiratory problems. The natural grade is mined, dried, ground, sifted and bagged, and the non-crystalline silica in this is not a health problem because we are unable to dissolve it. ♣

# Planting Pointers

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

One day at a friend's place I noticed eight matches protruding from the dirt in a pot plant. The matches were all half-buried headfirst in the soil and all evenly spaced around the plant. My curiosity aroused, I asked if a smoker had done the deed or if one of the children had been playing with matches. My friend laughed and said that the sulphur in the live match heads repelled worms and other pests.

She also showed me seedlings she was nurturing in half eggshells. She said that when they were ready to plant out, she would plant both plant and shell in the soil. The eggshells, she said, contained lime in abundance and made good fertiliser, and, because they contained the substance chitin, they attracted those micro-organisms which feed on the chitin found in nematode eggs.

Here are a few other ideas and hints for gardeners that I've come across over the years.

- Grow native plants to attract native birds which will in turn reduce the pest population.
- Water or hose the garden at sun-down instead of in the morning. This will ensure that the roots of plants get their share of the water and they won't lose any to evaporation.
- Make a good spray for cabbage moth and some other pests by mixing

together 50 grams of soap scraps, 150 grams of salt and ten litres of water.

• It's much better to water plants occasionally and thoroughly than often and little. The reason being to encourage deep roots that will not be affected by drought or flood.

• To extend the life of your garden tools, after each use wash or hose dirt, grass clippings etc from the tools and rub a little oil on the metal parts and some linseed oil on all the wooden handles.

• Dilute some Vegemite with a little warm water and spray around the garden. This will attract lacewings which in turn will control aphids.

• To prevent kinks in a garden hose, lay out the hose to its greatest extent and coil it on the ground in a figure of eight, then fold the lot into a single circle and store away. When used again the hose should uncoil freely.

• You are the proud owner of a beautiful rose garden and you love cutting the blooms and arranging them in vases but you cannot get used to wearing gloves. So by the time you have finished your floral adventure your hands look like they've been arranging porcupines instead of flowers. Next time take a vegetable peeler with you and, after snipping the stem, hold it near the flower and run the peeler downwards stripping all the thorns off. ♣

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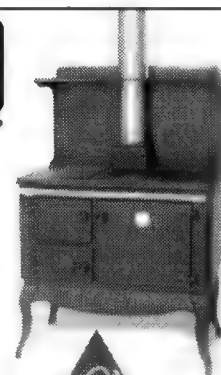
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# A Rare Breed Of Retiree

by Shirley and Jim Mayfield, Darlimurla, Vic.

Jim and I have been readers of *Grass Roots* for many years although this is the first time that I have written. I was prompted by the article on rare breeds of sheep because of our interest in Perendales. We have retired onto 18 acres of beautiful bush country near Mirboo North in South Gippsland and have managed to become reasonably self-sufficient. This has partially been prompted by my chemical allergy, but we are also seriously worried by the amounts of chemicals and additives in the modern food chain.

## THE AUSSIE WOOL QUILT STORY

In the early 1980s, having suffered from severe headaches and fatigue for several years, I was diagnosed with chemical and synthetic allergies in 1984. An allergy specialist that I saw advised me to eliminate as much polyester from my home as was possible. I wanted to replace my polyester pillows, but I could not buy a good wool pillow at a price I could afford. I decided to try and make a pillow stuffed with some of my spinning wool. This

cost me about \$1 in materials compared with the \$45 for the commercial article. I found that by using a pure wool pillow I was able to sleep much better than I had for a long time.

The next time I went to the specialist for a checkup I spoke to other patients and realised that there were many others looking for a safe and natural low-chemical product. I set about creating a quality and affordable wool-filled pillow, so that others could experience the joy of a good night's sleep. Other allergy sufferers that I met at the clinic asked me to make them some pillows and so was born 'Aussie Wool Quilts'.

In the beginning I sold the pillows on a cost-only basis with a request to let me know how they worked. In those early days my products were not brilliant because no one could give me any information on making pillows or doona-style quilts. Some of my first experimental models were complete disasters, but I kept trying and gradually worked out methods where the pillows and quilts were long wearing and reasonably easy to make.

As the requests for my products increased, I moved into the shearing shed, where, in 1990 I managed to make about 1000 quilts and underblankets as well as 1000 pillows on my own, often working 12 to 14 hours a day. I decided then that I would have to employ an assistant and I put on a full-time employee. The following year I had a purpose-built workshop and shop built on the farm. The workshop grew to employ five women in peak periods of the year, and in 1996 we made and sold 1900 quilts, nearly 800 underblankets, 17 mattresses and 2600 pillows. I sold the products at good quality craft markets and had many people referred on to me by word of mouth.

In 1992 Greg Cahill suggested I enter the Commonwealth Bank Farm Entrepreneurial Awards and I was thrilled to win their encouragement award. I also received a plaque from the East Gippsland Sheep Breeders that year for innovation with wool. We entered the Victorian Small Business Awards in 1993 and 1994 and were finalists both times. In 1994 we also were one of the seven winners of the Wool Invent Awards promoted by the inventors association. Finally, we entered the Fair Trading Awards in 1996 and were proud to be announced winners of the small business award for excellence in customer service in country Victoria. At the presentation we were told that one of the main reasons



Very rare (and very old) coloured Perendale ram and Perendale cross ewe.

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Soon after this Jim and I decided that we could not keep up with the way the business had grown and decided that it was time to slow down a little.

Now in our retirement, and still keeping pretty active, the country we are on is fairly poor compared to the surrounding countryside, although it abounds in many rare plants and fungi. We have protected about four acres that include a rare perched swamp with a covenant through Trust for Nature. These covenants are permanent and the area can never be cleared or developed.

I am continuing to follow my hobby of breeding coloured sheep (I started to breed these in 1974) and at present I am trying to resurrect the coloured Perendale breed that do so well in our cold climate. As a long-time member of the Coloured Sheep Breeders Association I have seen the numbers drop from 225 in our flock book in 1980 to only three in the book last year. I managed to get a purebred coloured ram last year, although I believe that he is 16 years old, and have put him to my Perendale cross ewes, including one old girl of 12 years. We now have 10 nice lambs from him. I have been a spinner for many years and the Perendale wool keeps us supplied with woollies, including slippers. The sheep, being a dual-purpose breed, also supply meat and sheepskins. I also find the breed very hardy and long living with a fleece that will not get rain damaged in a wet climate. If there are any *Grass Roots* readers who think they may have a

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coloured Perendale or would be interested in helping me form a breeding group, I would love to hear from them.

As well, we keep two milking goats, (the milk by the way, is not lactose free as stated in a recent Feedback article, but is much easier to digest than cows' milk). We also have our Dexter cows at my son's property. We find that the little Dexters when joined to Herefords give a very good meat animal for small acreages.

We used to have a Large Black pig (one of the rare breeds) to raise our own organic pork and bacon, but we sold her last year as we are not strong enough to round her up and take to the stud each time we wish to get her in pig. We did raise two of her babies and have recently had them made into pork, bacon, cabana, ham, salami and smoked soup bones by a local firm who use mainly natural herbs and flavourings. We will get a couple of piglets each year or so from a local breeder and raise them on grain and free range to supply our needs. We find that the flavour and texture of home-grown meat is far superior, and, as we have the home butcher come to our place, the animals are never ill-treated or stressed before slaughter.

We also have Aracauna chooks (a breed that lays blue eggs which are reported to be low cholesterol) and Barnevelder chooks (deep brown eggs)

and a Maremma dog to keep foxes away from chooks and lambs. Jim is working hard on building up the soil in the vegetable garden, where we grow as many vegetables as we can, including Crown Prince pumpkins which mature in less time than many varieties, as well as having a lovely rich flavour. We are starting to get a few nice meals from our home-grown products.

I have a fairly extensive herb garden and flavour many of our meals with these. We have managed to grow a lemon myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*) and this adds a lovely flavour to soups and stews. I am trying to grow my own tea and have a *Camellia sinensis* bush. I have dried the leaves but they have very little flavour. Does anyone know how to make green tea from these leaves? Best wishes to all *Grass Roots* readers.

Shirley and Jim Mayfield, 3  
Cuthbertson Crt, Darlimurla 3871. Email:  
jimshirl@net.tech.com.au 🌿

For a tasty pickled beetroots, boil the vinegar, leave to cool and add two tablespoons of sweet sherry to the liquid. If you have an excess of vegetables, why not dice (if appropriate), sauté, cool and freeze in small freezer bags, then add them to soups and stews later on. 🌿

# Step Up With Stile

by Neville Jackson, Valhalla.

Stiles were probably devised in ages past by a shepherd who became tired of opening and shutting gates behind himself. The style of stiles varies, dependent upon need, terrain and materials available, but the essential requirement is to facilitate easy access across a fenceline without a gate that could be left open to stock. Stiles are useful around a property and can be easy to arrange. There are many advantages to be gained from the efficient use of stiles around a property. Horses can soon learn how to open a gate, but not to close it after themselves, and there's always the visitor who 'forgets'. We use several, sited at strategic places around our fenced orchard, vineyard and gardens.

Most of ours are of the simplest construction, merely cleanly cut hardwood timber stumps of suitable girth and height. Always ensure enough room for two feet at a time on each stump. These stumps are firmly dug in and wired or strapped together for stability (see photo this page). Steel strapping is freely available from transport depots or unloading docks behind hardware outlets. Most storemen are only too happy to get rid of this awkward waste product for it can easily cut skin or poke eyes.

Waste strapping usually comes in two types. It can be a thick green painted one, very stiff (probably tensile) and difficult to pierce, or of black steel which is much easier to bend and pierce. Of course, galvanised steel strapping can be purchased in rolls at building supply houses. To use strapping measure the length required with string, cut with snips or snap off by bending back and forth several times with pliers. Use a nail punch to make nail or screw holes as required. I punch two holes about 25 millimetres and 50 millimetres from each end and other holes to pin strapping neatly against stump irregularities. Steel strapping is so useful for other applications that



Multi-stump stile, easy and cheap.

require a secure strap that I obtain this material whenever available.

*Of course, whenever handling steel strapping or wire under strain, gloves and eye protection are essential. Keep children at a distance.*

On a recent trip to Tasmania we saw and used several different types of stiles. An old but simple one had a stump each side and close to the fence. A sturdy plank through the fence wires provided a safe footing. A fence post conveniently close provided a handy hold. This version is more suitable for lower fences.

On Maria Island, a former penal settlement off the east coast of Tasmania, a more elaborate structure had been erected by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to traverse a fence around an environmental study area. The stile consisted of two joined staircases to simply walk up and over the fence. An easy-to-use stile is essential for the many walking visitors who enjoy this scenic island where no vehicles are allowed (see photo next page).

An older design of stile is the crossed-planks type. A sturdy fence post or strainer high enough to provide a safe handhold is notched horizontally to take a plank on an angle of about 45 degrees to the fenceline. Another notch at a suitable height takes a second plank, angled at 90 degrees to the first. Viewed from above the planks form a cross. To use, the planks are stepped up, then the walker reverses face to swing the leg over the fence. For centuries this type of stile was popular in Europe for shepherds, but probably not for ladies in crinolines.

There are several versions of the 'vertical stiles' once seen at entrances to rail stations. A more common one has two closely positioned fence posts braced above with wire or rail. Another post is offset as in a triangle, so that a person (or dogs) can pass through but not the larger animals such as cows, sheep, goats or horses (lambs, kids and rabbits often, however, find a way).



Right: Maria Island walk-over stile.

We keep a lookout for suitably proportioned logs as possible stump stiles whenever firewood is cut. These stumps are stored on old iron in a dry spot to avoid splitting. Wires or strapping affixed around both ends will ensure they maintain their integrity until required and any centre rotted-out hole can be filled with cement or,

preferably, left as a lizard habitat. We have found these are favourite hidey-holes for our lizards.

We constantly use several stiles and find their old-world charm and rustic appearance add to 'Shangri la's' ambience. 🐸

## RURAL INDUSTRY STARTER KITS

The Sapphire Coast Producers Association in the Bega Valley, NSW has produced a set of three starter kits for those wishing to set up alternative farming operations on smallholdings. The books cover flower growing, organic horticulture, and meat rabbit production. Each book goes through the basics of getting started in the relevant industry, giving hands-on information; covers the necessary business-related matters (planning, financing, budgeting, taxation); shows how to promote and market your business; and provides reams of useful contacts. Many *Grass Roots* readers looking for ways of diversifying or supplementing their incomes will find these practical publications well worth the cost: \$49 each plus \$8.50 postage for one book or \$12 for two or three.

To obtain the books, or for more information write to: SCPA Publishing, PO Box 1054, Bega 2550. Ph: 02-6492-0161.

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# Sprouts For Health

by Pauline Kenyon, Dunoon, NSW.

Did you know you can grow a salad in your kitchen in only a few days? It takes only two minutes per day. No mess, no dirt! Sprouts can be grown from seed in ordinary glass jars without lids. The most popular sprouts are brown lentil, mung bean, alfalfa and wheat. Others are rye, barley, radish, fenugreek, unhulled millet, mustard, cress. Sprouts are very, very nutritious with lots of vitamins (A, B, C and E), minerals, protein, carbohydrates, plus trace elements.

They are low in sodium and are therefore good food for a hypertensive person. Alfalfa is excellent for arthritic and rheumatic sufferers, because it is alkaline, and can help deal effectively with possible excess uric acid. Wheatgrass juice also has a vitamin E content and can do apparent miracles for the digestive system. Alfalfa and wheatgrass are two of the finest sources of vitamin C and chlorophyll.

## JAR SPROUTING

- Soak one or two tablespoons of seeds in a jar of water overnight, but for alfalfa, use only half a tablespoon.

- Next day, discard soak water, rinse the sprouts and drain thoroughly. Place a tea strainer over the jar when pouring water away. Then cover the jar top with fabric held in place by an elastic band.

- Rinse the sprouts twice a day (more often in a heatwave). Drain well. There is no need to keep sprouts in the dark. They can grow on the kitchen bench but out of direct sunlight or, in winter, in a warm spot in the kitchen.

- Some sprouts are best eaten when the new growth is twice the length of the seed: wheat for example; others are ready when leaves start to develop after three to six days: mung, lentil, alfalfa.

- Sprouts ready for salad eating can be stored in the fridge for up to three days then rinsed and left in the daylight for an hour or two before eating. It is best to rinse stored sprouts once a day.

## TRAY SPROUTING

For the more adventurous sprout grower, sprouts can also be grown in a tray with three centimetres of soil. The most popular ones are unhulled sunflower and unhulled buckwheat. These take six to twelve days. Tray sprouting takes more time than jar sprouting.

- Soak half a glass each of sunflower and buckwheat seeds in water overnight.

- If you use a white foam supermarket tray, line the bottom with a plastic sheet cut to size so that the end holes are not covered, and so that the seed roots cannot penetrate the foam.

- Spread the soil, water it thoroughly and tilt to drain.

- Spread the soaked seeds, half a tray each of sunflower and buckwheat.

- The seeds must be kept in the dark till they are sprouting well, so cover with some more soil and water them again, or cover with a metal tray upside down, or cover with four layers of damp newspaper with black plastic on top to provide darkness and prevent drying out. Do not water again till the sprouts push through the soil or are at least two centimetres.

- When the tray is uncovered, water daily, leave tilted to drain.

- Before harvesting the green tops with scissors, brush off any husks still attached. Just cut enough for one day and water the remaining sprouts once a day till the tray is finished. Leave tilted.

- The soil in the tray can be remixed and used again or added to your garden, and a fresh batch of soil used.

## Wheatgrass Juice

If you need wheatgrass juice to assist your recovery from any health problem, grow wheat sprouts (one tray per day per person) and cut when 20 – 26 centimetres tall. You need a special wheatgrass juicer. You can drink it straight or add it to other juice such as carrot juice. Wheatgrass juice is a miracle food, especially for cancer sufferers, broken bones, digestive problems – any health problem. If you do not



have a wheatgrass juicer, just chew the grass and discard the pulp!

## SALADS

Most people like to use sprouts in raw salads, adding them to lettuce, carrot, cucumber, tomato, capsicum, parsley, mint. Although the cooking process reduces some of the vitamins in sprouts, they can be used in cooked dishes, or just steamed for two minutes (not alfalfa!).

### Alfalfa Salad

Mix alfalfa and grated carrot, sprinkle with orange juice. Optional – add a few currants.

### Sprout Salad

Mix several kinds of sprouts, add grated carrot and (raw) beetroot, and any other raw vegetable.

### Salad Dressings

- Mix tahini, a little tamari, lemon juice and a little water.

- Have you ever tried macadamia nut oil? It's sweet and yummy!

- Shake in a jar (with lid on!) lemon juice, salad oil, dash of honey and a little water.

- Blend avocado, honey, lemon juice and (optional) salad oil.

- Shake in a jar: vinegar, water, oil, crushed garlic, tamari.

## BUYING SEEDS

Seeds should be bought from health food shops or other outlets which guarantee no pesticide or fungicide content. Seeds sold for broadacre have been treated with these substances and are not fit for human consumption. Buy organic seeds if available.

Good luck with your indoor vegetable garden. It is fun, especially for children. Sprouts can be part of your daily food, and are cheaper and more nutritious than shop-bought food. I have been growing sprouts for 28 years. ♡

# Economical Laying Breeds

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

Chooks can be entertaining as well as productive creatures and many people look for more than just a high egg output when selecting their backyard flock. The pure breeds can be found in many plumage colours and patterns and, although they can't compete with commercial hybrids on eggs laid for volume of feed consumed, they are frequently more suited to the casual management offered by *Grass Roots* backyarders and small farmers. The ideal chook is the one that is best suited to the environment and management system in which it is kept.

There are a couple of pure breeds that should be considered as contenders for the home flock; they're hardy, good layers, attractive to look at and have perky personalities. They are not large bodied breeds, certainly not as large as the Leghorn (which has a very healthy appetite), and are known to be economical to keep. The down side is that one of the breeds lays smallish sized eggs. Coincidentally they all produce white-shelled eggs, so if your heart is set on brown-shelled eggs for breakfast these may not be for you. We will look at brown-shelled layers another time.

The breeds spotlighted are the Ancona, available in standard and bantam, Campine (pronounced Campeen) which comes in two striking colours but only as standard sized fowl, and Hamburgh, which is found in several

colours in standard but is relatively uncommon in the bantam form.



## ANCONA

Italian in origin, they are cousins of Leghorns but have never achieved the prominence of the latter. They're attractive looking – both sexes have a lustrous green-black plumage, each feather finished at the tip with a small white vee. As the birds age the vee gets larger, increasing a small amount with the new feathers that grow after the annual moult. An old hen of five will appear piebald looking. One of the appealing characteristics of this breed is the ability to come into lay early, even before pullets have reached their potential adult size. There are numerous small-bodied strains around so it is easy to have a moderate sized layer that doesn't need bags of feed to satisfy it. Eggs are usually large despite the moderate size of the pullet or hen.

The females are easily quietened and can become favourites of children. Despite their close genetic background with Leghorns, they have a more docile and less flighty temperament.

Do they go broody? They are not supposed to – all the breeds from the Mediterranean have a reputation for being nonsitters – but my Anconas frequently went broody and were good mothers.

Temperament of roosters is generally good but they are active and noisy, so are not suitable for urban areas unless neighbours like poultry. Roosters are robust and can easily manage a dozen hens. If they're kept on for a few years you will need to trim the spurs, taking the pointed end off spurs at the end of the first season and filing the remaining section to a blunt finish.

Anconas are quite long lived, they're very hardy, handle hot climates well, are economical to keep, and although not commonplace are reasonably numerous so not difficult to obtain. There is even a breed club that has been in operation for many years. Over the last decade a Red Ancona has been developed and, while not of the quality of the standard type, it has enthusiastic followers.



## CAMPINE

It's possible you won't have heard of this breed before, let alone seen specimens of it. Campines came from the warm dry plains of Belgium and were kept for laying as well as the production of *poulets de lait* (white skinned milk chicken) where they were despatched as early as six weeks.

They are a stunning looking breed;

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large red comb, white earlobes, dark brown eyes with a black pupil, close fitting plumage that has a ground colour of either pure white (Silver Campine) or rich gold (Gold Campine), with transverse green-black barring. The hackles on both varieties should be free from barring, giving the effect of sparkling white or gold but a clean hackle is hard to achieve. The barring on feathers is slightly curved, resulting in the appearance of black rings around the body. Legs and feet are leaden blue in colour.

Campines are not just good lookers, they are excellent small flock birds. They're friendly, even slightly naughty, and they're very active so are good foragers. The males can be hard on hens because of their active nature, so try and keep a ratio of 9 – 10 hens per rooster. Supplement numbers with brown egg layers if Campine hens are in short supply; you will easily distinguish the latter's large white-shelled egg from tinted or brown eggs. Hens are nonbroody.

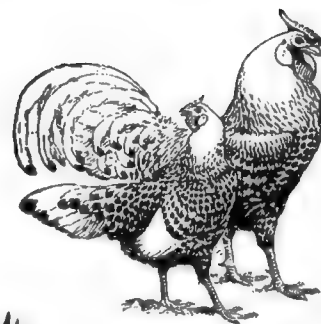
A warning about Campine chickens is necessary. They are one of the fastest growing and early maturing of all pure-breds, and feather-peck like mad. No one really knows if the fast feather growth puts greater nutritional demands on the body, or whether boredom is the trigger, but it's rare to see Campine chicks that have been raised in brooders with complete tails. This problem rarely arises if eggs are hatched under brood-ies and raised naturally.

When breeding Campines, Golds can be mated with Silvers and the offspring will assort into equal numbers of each colour. The males have a unique feature that is known as henny feathering. They lack the long flowing sickle feathers in the tail that distinguish Leghorn and other males and their neck hackle feathers are rounded, not pointed as on most roosters. Males with henny feathering have increased oestrogen formation, but it doesn't appear to affect the fertility and sexuality of Campine roosters.

Campines are rare, even among the exhibition fraternity, but are worth looking for. Keen breeders have developed a bantamised form, but it could be some time before miniature stock is available for sale.



Ancona



Spangled  
Hamburg



Campine

### HAMBURGH

This is a tricky breed to discuss as several colour varieties (Black and Spangled) have an English origination, while the Pencilled varieties came from the Netherlands. Despite the diverse geographic beginnings, the varieties of this breed clearly share the same forebears.

Hamburgs are smaller and lighter bodied than both Anconas and Campines and lay smaller, beautifully shaped eggs. Output varies between the Hamburg varieties, the Black laying best of all.

What does the breed look like? They're a close plumaged, graceful looking breed, the males displaying well developed flowing tails while females have a neat reasonably long tail. The Hamburg head is distinct – a rose comb generously covered with 'workings' or tiny fleshy protuberances and ending in a neat spike, round white ear lobes, round red wattles and bold red eyes. The Black variety has a green sheen on feathering. The Spangled varieties, Silver or Gold, have black markings in an array of shapes from half-moons, round spangles and dagger shaped tips on the silver or gold ground colour. The Pencilled varieties, also Gold and Silver, have even pencilling of parallel lines and a clear neck hackle on females and lacing on the black tail

feathers in males. All have lead blue legs and feet.

Hamburgs quieten well, though the Pencilled varieties are naturally more flighty and have a reputation for noisiness, even the hens. They're great fliers, top foragers and like freedom, but cope well with urban confinement. Broodiness rarely occurs and, like the other breeds discussed, they are modest with food consumption. The bantam forms of this breed consume even less!

### CONCLUSION

These three white-shelled layers offer a cost-effective alternative to the Leghorn or large bodied dual-purpose breeds like the Australorp, Rhode Island Red or Sussex, which produce tinted egg shells. As well as being easy on the pocket, they will delight the eye with their neat shapes and superbly coloured or patterned plumage.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

The best way to track down stock is through your local poultry club or agriculture society. Ancona admirers might like to contact The Ancona Club of Australia, C/- Adrian Saines, PO Box 538, Young 2594, ph: 02-6382-1083; or the Ancona Club of Queensland, C/- Claire Haitchildt, 17 Woodgate St, Churchill 4305, ph: 07-3202-2213. Enclose an SAE if writing please. ♀

# WHAT'S ON

With event organisers wanting to take advantage of the fine weather before winter there is plenty to do in late summer and autumn. Visit one of the many festivals or support a worthy cause such as the Walk Against Want.

## SUSTAINABLE LIVING FESTIVAL

This event will take place from 21 to 23 February at the recently opened Federation Square in Melbourne. The festival will host artworks, film, soundscapes, fashion and interactive exhibits designed to inform and inspire people to live responsibly. The festival's six themes, think, feel, create, design, feast and play, reflect the elements needed for a sustainable Australian future. For more details contact the Sustainable Living Festival on 03-9412-7888, or visit the website at [www.sustainablelivingfestival.org](http://www.sustainablelivingfestival.org)

## WALK AGAINST WANT

Put your foot down against poverty this year and Walk Against Want. Oxfam Community Aid Abroad's annual fundraiser is taking place on Sunday, 23 February. Over 70 walks will run simultaneously around Australia and organisers are hoping for at least 20,000 people to help raise money for poor communities in 30 countries. Walk routes are between 5 and 20 kilometres. To register or obtain more information contact 1800-034-034, visit one of Oxfam Community Aid Abroad's shops or visit the website at [www.caa.org.au/walk/](http://www.caa.org.au/walk/)

## ALTERNATIVE FARMING EXPO

This year's Seymour Alternative Farming Expo will be held at Kings Park in Seymour on Friday to Sunday, 14 to 16 February from 9am to 5pm each day. There will be plenty of farming alternatives to discover including livestock, solar energy, hydroponics and building alternatives. Also a great day out for all the family with food and wine, chainsaw carving, children's rides and fashion parades, to name a few. For more information call 03-5799-1211.

## HUGH LOVEL TOUR

Hugh Lovel, author of *A Biodynamic Farm*, is touring Australia throughout February to conduct three-day workshops in Toowoomba, Coffs Harbour, Albury and Perth on 'What is Rain? The Causes of Drought and Flood, and Understanding Weather Patterns and Nature'. Lorraine Cahill and Australian biodynamic specialists, Hamish Mackay and Brian Keats, will accompany him. For more information contact Michelle Bell-Turner on 07-4095-2194, or visit the website on [www.biodynamics.net.au](http://www.biodynamics.net.au)

## WINE HARVEST FESTIVAL

The Canberra wineries of Hall, Lake George, Murrumbateman and Yass will open their cellar doors and welcome visitors to the Canberra District Wine Harvest Festival over the Easter long weekend, 19 to 21 April. The region features over 25 wineries and 400 hectares

of vines producing 3.5 million bottles of quality cool climate wine annually. The event will include seminars, lectures, winemaker's tours and talks, grape picking and crushing, tethered hot-air balloon flights, jazz and music recitals, plenty of food tastings, and general entertainment. For more information about the festival contact the Canberra Visitor's Centre on 1800-100-660, or visit: [www.canberratourism.com.au](http://www.canberratourism.com.au)

## BAG A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

The ubiquitous plastic bag is a major environmental menace. March 2003 has been designated as an action month aimed at reducing their use and increasing the number of used bags recycled. Watch out for and support projects in your area, especially where you shop. For more information contact Kath Logan at Clean Up Australia on 03-9692-1205, 0416-083-884, or 1800-024-890, or visit the website at [www.cleanup.com.au](http://www.cleanup.com.au)

## GREEN LIVING FAIR

Canberra's fourth Green Living Fair will be held on Sunday, 23 March from 10am to 4pm at the ROCKS, (corner Barry Drive and Marcus Clarke Street, entrance off Childers Street, in Civic). There'll be plenty of information to help people steer a course for more ecologically integrated living. For more details contact the Canberra Environment Centre on 02-6248-0885, or visit the Centre's website at [www.ecoaction.net.au](http://www.ecoaction.net.au)

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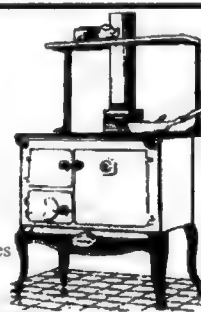
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# Roberino's Water-Saving Hints

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

The present drought across much of Australia is a stark reminder of the importance of water conservation. Governments at all levels will need to increasingly prioritise resources to rectify large-scale problems of inefficient irrigation, evaporation, seepage, leakage and uneconomic and inequitable usage.

Saving water on a personal level is a lot easier once you have made a commitment. Every household wastes water because rarely is greywater reused for gardens or lawns. Find out your local authority's regulations about greywater reuse and devise a system to suit your needs. You'll find specific information about this topic in GRs 77, 109 and 117.

Growing fruits and vegetables uses lots of water, but this can be dramatically reduced by some forethought. Top watering loses up to 80 percent of water by evaporation; root or bottom watering only loses about 20 percent. There are many ways to achieve this.

To prevent water from draining away downwards, plastic savers can be used beneath smaller plants that are not

very deep rooted. Recycled paper and newspapers can also be used at planting time. This method also retains nutrients that would otherwise end up in watercourses, creating algae and other problems of pollution. There is no shortage of newspapers and magazines because only half of those printed usually get sold (not GRs of course). Oh what a waste of trees.

Plastic, weedmat, newspaper and/or lots of organic mulch will reduce surface evaporation significantly. It's always preferable, for the sake of soil health and plant nutrition, to use organic mulches. However, when materials are in short supply, black plastic makes a useful short-term weed smotherer-cum-evaporation retardant. Plastic is not suitable for long-term use as mulch.

For fruit trees and other deep-rooted plants you can insert polypipe, as shown in the diagram, to reach the root level of the plant. Pour water into the pipe and cork up the hole. Water will slowly seep into the soil surrounding the base of the pipe.

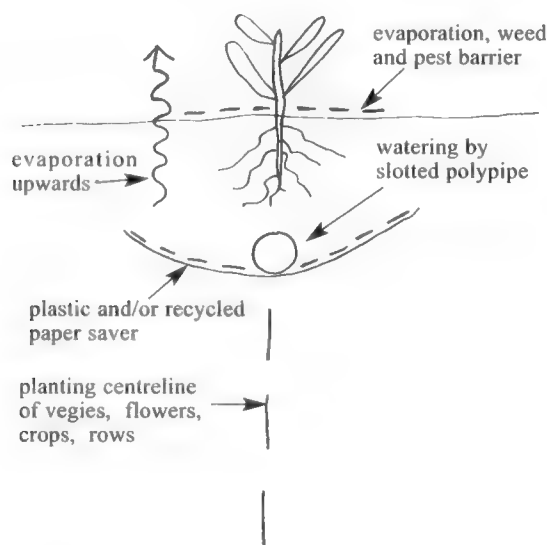
The next method reuses old garden

hose to water a garden very efficiently.

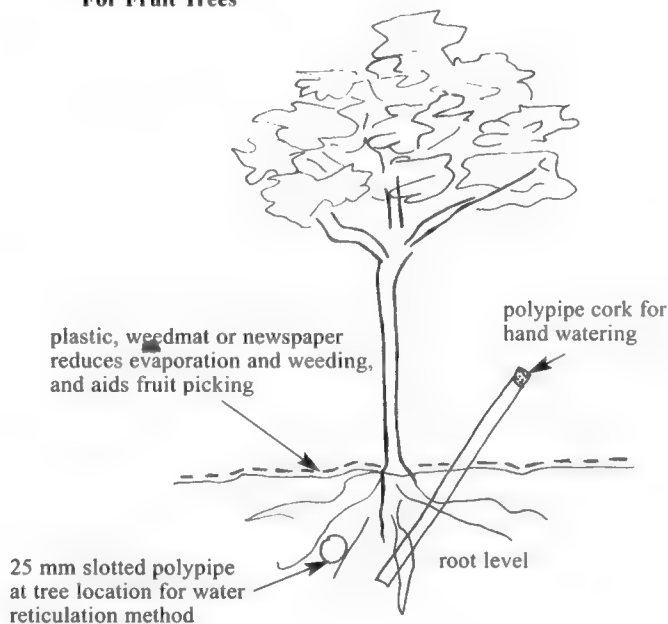
When your garden hose has become hard and brittle from the UV of the sun, you can get maybe another 15 years use out of it by reusing it underground for low-evaporation, water-saving garden, vegie or fruit tree irrigation. You'll probably find by asking around that most of your friends and neighbours also have some old hose lying around that you can put to good use. The best time to dig trenches for the hose is just after sunrise when the air is cool. The hoses should be at root level of whatever it is you're watering. Wait till the hose is nice and pliable from being in the hot sun all day. Straighten it out and pull it into the trenches. Use poly joiners from your hardware store to join or T-section your lines. Drill one-millimetre holes at the points you actually want to irrigate. A recycled 200-litre drum (of greywater) will make a good tank.

You will have to experiment to find a system that suits you, your crops, soil type and climatic conditions. Whatever, a reduction in water and fertiliser use is guaranteed. ♻

## For Smaller Plants



## For Fruit Trees



# A RAINFOREST GIANT

by Jose Robinson, Noosaville, Qld.

The bunya (*Araucaria bidwillii*) is a majestic rainforest tree that once grew prolifically, particularly in south-east Queensland. It was also abundant in a quite distant location from there, the Mt Molloy area in Far North Queensland. Aborigines love the delicious nuts produced from this giant tree and have been eating them for centuries.

In the early pioneering days the bunya tree was logged extensively, valued for its tall straight timber. Unfortunately, through lack of foresight, bunya numbers diminished to the extent that today the only remaining large stands are found in the Bunya National Park in south-east Queensland. A smaller number can still be seen around Mt Molloy.

Although the tree is fairly large at maturity, few people plant them even if they have acreage. Certainly, it does not belong in suburban gardens. The tree has been planted in many large parks and public gardens and botanical gardens in Queensland. At all stages of its growth it is a very handsome tree. The leaves are quite sharp and walking over fallen leaves with bare feet can be quite painful. Bunyas growing on mountain sides, when viewed in profile, make a distinct outline against the sky and are readily recognised from a considerable distance away.

Bunya tree cones can grow to about 300 millimetres long and 200 millimetres in breadth, roughly equivalent to a

very large coconut. Female cones are a rich darkish green. The cones are completely covered by a type of large pointed scale with a sharp needle point. They need to be handled with care or one's hands will be sharply spiked. Each scale has inside it a large oval-shaped seed of a creamy white colour. The outside casing of this kernel has a fibrous brown exterior which can be quite difficult to remove. I have tried several methods of removing the coating. One way is to boil the seeds then endeavour to remove the exterior with a sharp knife. Another method is to simply stand each seed upright and cut down the centre with a sharp knife, and the outer covering can then be peeled away in two pieces. A third way is to place kernels in a campfire and singe the outer covering. Only the topmost branches bear cones, so they can be extremely difficult to reach.

## CONES

Cones are produced each year from January to March. They can weigh from 10 to 20 kilograms each. So, falling from a height of 20 metres or more, their delivery could be as deadly as a falling coconut to anyone who happened to be under the tree.

The huge cones each yield up to two kilograms of low-fat, high-carbohydrate nuts. They can be eaten raw, boiled with salt, or roasted for two minutes. They can also be dried and ground into flour. I find roasted nuts are the tastiest. Unusual among rainforest trees, no part of the bunya nut is toxic.

In my experience over the years with bunya nuts, they need to be eaten fresh; even kept in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks they can become mouldy. They can be frozen if you have an abundance of them, but, when thawed, the nuts have a slightly granular texture. Slivers cut from the nuts make a tasty cocktail accompaniment.

## ABORIGINAL LORE

A three-year cycle sees a bumper crop

of cones produced every third year. This was once a signal for the Aborigines to hold a big feast in the Bunya Mountains. Nearby tribes hosted the feasts and would send out message sticks to tribes further afield. Sometimes the invitations would reach far out west. If there had previously been intertribal fighting, for whatever reason, it was all temporarily put aside while this humungous feast was in progress. All and sundry shared in the plentiful bonanza.

To access the crops Aborigines would cut toe-holds in the straight, tall trunks. Some are still in evidence in older trees to this day. As well as toe-holds, climbers would twine a strong vine around the trunk to help support them as they climbed yet higher, cutting the notches as they went. Some trees would have been 20 metres even to the lowest of the nuts.

The Aborigines ate the delicious starchy nuts raw, or roasted in a campfire. As well, they ground some into flour. The nuts collected from the tree-tops were much more desirable than the ones which invariably fell of their own accord to the ground and soon became spoiled by insects or animals. It is said that some Aborigines buried nuts in mud beside waterholes for several weeks then dug them up for eating. I would imagine some would have been rather mouldy by then, and perhaps some would even be shooting.

This nut is one of the few plant, fruit or nut contributions that Aboriginal men took to their camps. The men normally feasted on fruits and nuts while on hunting trips, but it was left to the women of the tribes to be the gatherers of these foods, along with smallish animals. However, bunya nuts were the exception.

The bunya nut tree is truly an outstanding example in the world of rainforest giants.

In GR 99 there was an article on bunya trees that included some recipes. ☺

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# Greywater for the Garden

by Robert Millet, Coffs Harbour, NSW.

Years ago all wastewater except storm runoff was considered a dirty, contaminated liquid that had to be sewered away in haste from the house to the treatment plant, else our world might be poisoned. Thanks to modern research and lateral thinking, our reluctance about reusing wastewater is beginning to change. In a world getting shorter and shorter of clean fresh water, we must begin to use and reuse our water more wisely than ever before. Don't hold your breath for cheap desalination, mates. I've heard that spiel for decades. Besides, with the increasing use of marine outfall discharge pipes (which ought to be banned), who wants to redrink that polluted water, no matter how many times it's scrubbed clean?

The main objection to using greywater, according to some authorities, is that flies are attracted to the water pouring onto the ground. This is true because most greywater contains various items that flies find interesting, if not edible. Some councils allow greywater usage if it's discharged underground, and as long as it does not percolate down to the water table. I definitely would not use greywater on edible root crops, especially those eaten raw; stick to trees and vines.

Another objection to greywater is that it contains fats that must be trapped out before the water can be reused. Once again, true. But if you, like more and more people, are coming to realise that a low-fat diet is healthier, then this will slowly cease to be a major headache.

One good reason for reusing greywater is to prevent 'harvest erosion'. After picking a bowl of vegies for the table, most of us wash them, along with our dirty hands, prior to preparation. All that water and soil are normally lost down the drain. Another compelling reason to reuse the water is that greywater tends to be a bit alkaline from the soap or cleaning agents used (eco-friendly products, please).

This is the cheapest fertiliser for citrus that I have ever found. In fact, the citrus trees I had in the bush turned out some of the biggest and sweetest tasting fruit ever, watered extensively with greywater.

Well, if you've read this far you must at least be interested in using greywater. So, how do we harvest it? Quite easily, actually. The simplest system is to connect a large diameter hose to the kitchen drainpipe and direct it onto the garden, but this has the faults already mentioned. A better way is to install a 50-millimetre plastic ball valve in the drainline and, above the valve, a 'tee' as shown in figure 1. Depending on the hose internal diameter (ID) chosen (at least 19 millimetres but better 25 millimetres minimum), fit the appropriate reducers to the 'tee' outlet. Fasten hose with a clamp or a couple of wire wraps and twist. Whichever type of cheap hose is used (water, vacuum, dust sucking, flexible electric conduit), make sure the inner surface is reasonably smooth, and that the hose lies flat on the ground. This is important in such a low-pressure system.

With the valve off, greywater will now flow into the hose. One noticeable effect is that the sink will drain a bit slower than usual. At least monthly, let a quantity of hot water drain away through the sewer line to flush away any buildup of bugs. I suspect that roots, which might have invaded the pipe, would shrivel, if not die, because of decreased water flow. Because the sink might contain large bits of food scraps, it pays to use a strainer in the plug hole to prevent hose blockages – shake the detritus into the compost bucket. What, you don't compost? Then dig a hole and bury the stuff in rotation around the garden.

If you have some unsuitable water in the sink, such as fat and oil scum from scrubbing pots and pans, turn the valve on to allow the water to drain to the sewer. Better yet is to use the old

World War II trick of pouring all fats into a tin, then taking it to a fat recycling point. Ideally the control of the valve ought to be in the kitchen and can be done by using a low-cost, garden-type solenoid valve.

Similarly, the water from the laundry and bath can be harvested (your garden will hug you heaps if you use natural soaps and cleansing agents). Yes, it means getting in a plumber, but, once done, heaps of water can be reused and this must be a plus for the driest land in the world. One day, I hope new houses will, by law, be plumbed to encourage the use of greywater systems. Houses up on stumps or with the garden below the slope have the easiest situations for harvesting greywater. Permaculture books are packed with ideas to use greywater.

Resist the idea of draining all greywater into an underground tank, from which you pump out when needed. I tried this once and after a week the stench, even in the windy south-west country of WA, was a bit too much; yet

Figure 1: Greywater Control Valve

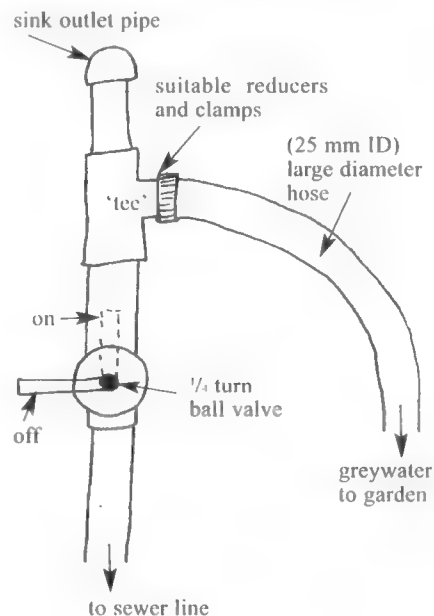
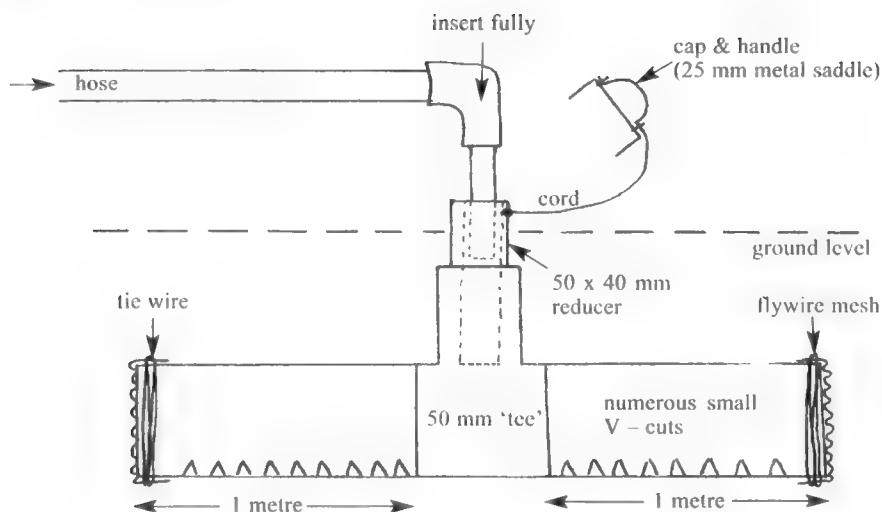


Figure 2: Discharge Point



perhaps if you discharged underground it would be okay. I made the mistake of using a pump and a butterfly sprinkler whew! Perhaps diluting the water with fresh might be less offensive.

Note: If your council does not allow the use of greywater, then you must not do this, particularly if you live in a water catchment area. As attractive as civil disobedience is, experience has shown that a well-organised lobby often can swing bureaucratic thinking to a more practical, sensible view.

The system I used out bush allowed me to reuse my greywater and discharge it underground, no flies were attracted and, because I ate vegetarian and nonfried meals, little if any grease was involved. I tried to use as many recycled components as possible, often asking plumbers for offcuts of pipe and other materials.

Following figure 2, cut two one-metre lengths of 50-millimetre plastic pipe, then glue them into a 'tee' fitting. Into the vertical 'tee' opening, glue a 50 x 40 millimetre reducing fitting. On the 40-millimetre diameter cap, drill two holes to mount a 25-millimetre electrical saddle – metal or plastic. This serves as a handle to remove the lid. Using a saw, angle grinder, or whatever, cut a series of narrow V-slots into the bottom of the pipe to allow water to drain out. Take some plastic flyscreen and cover each end of the pipe. Fasten in place with two

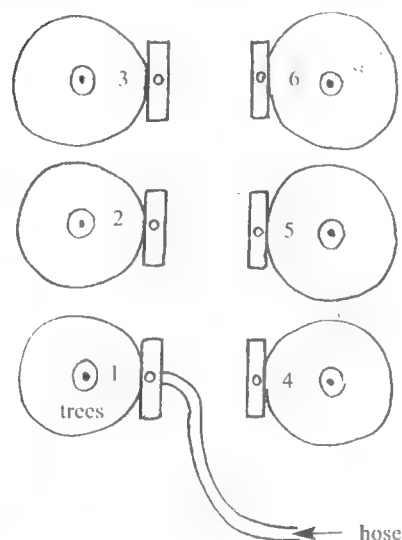
wraps and a twist of galvanised wire.

Make as many discharge points as needed. On my block I made eight points to cover all the citrus trees and vines that would benefit from greywater in summer. Even during periods of heavy rain I used greywater, if only to recycle nutrients and soil.

Somewhere around the dripline of each tree, as suggested in figure 3, dig a trench to bury the pipe – leave only the cap sticking out. Lay the pipe as level as you can. Next to the pipe drive in a small stake to remind you where each pipe cap is (in case you use lots of mulch or mow the area). If you wish, number each stake to aid in orderly selection.

One useful habit a sailor learns is to take a 'turn around the deck' each evening and morning to verify equipment is shipshape. I carried this habit over into gardening. Each morning before brekky I would do my turn and inspect for any signs of burst hoses or leaking tanks, pick ripe fruit, turn my compost tumbler, smile at the kookaburras laughing (and occasionally try to laugh back at them), and swap over the greywater hose from one discharge point to the next in line. This regular rotation prevents one point from getting too much water or having a build-up of any fats or debris. The fauna busy in the soil and pipe will clean out the debris, but require more than a day or so. The beauty of this system is that if

Figure 3: Typical Discharge Point Layout



any one pipe gets clogged, you can simply pull it up, flush it out, and rebury – a few minutes' work.

Another advantage of this system is that if you choose to give extra water or apply liquid fertiliser, at feeder root level, simply take off the cap and insert your hose or pour in the fertiliser. As soon as the hose is removed, replace the cap so no flies can get in. On my system I tied the cap to the pipe to avoid loss. One of the reasons I used a 50 x 40 millimetre reducer was that I had jammed an old vacuum cleaner fitting into my hose, which just happened to fit snugly into the 40-millimetre reducer, so that no flies or other bugs could enter for 24 hours while the cap was off. The main thing is to make sure the hose end fits easily but firmly into the 'tee' fitting to exclude flies. An elbow and short length of pipe at the end of the hose (refer figure 2) keeps the discharge end of the greywater hose as low as possible to maximise the rate of flow.

One day using greywater will be required, and with all its advantages why hesitate to employ it? I recommend using as much greywater as you can. Not only will you save on the water bill, you'll help reduce the infrastructure needed to supply your house with water. Mostly, however, using greywater helps the garden produce more to keep you and your family healthy. Isn't that worth a small effort? ☺



# Feeding Farm Pets During Drought

by Jack Miles, Wangaratta, Vic.

It's the owners of pet sheep and cattle or those who keep a small number of stock – all named and individual idiosyncrasies recognised – that get into trouble during a severe drought. A combination of farming inexperience, sentimentality and ignorance of the range of information put out by government farming organisations can lead to tragic circumstances. Hopefully this article will point blockies and five-acre farmers in the right direction for coping in the months ahead.

## REFLECT ON CONVENTIONAL STRATEGIES

Commercial producers will have already faced the issue of which animals to sell and which are worth feeding through a drought. The choice, regardless of farming operation, will have centred around the animals integral to achieving long-term production aims. Those selected would have displayed or carried traits for superior meat, milk or wool production. Farmers will have kept the stock that will generate income when the drought breaks.

Numbers will have been reduced before feed and water supplies were under pressure, that is, animals went to market while in good condition and while interest existed among buyers. It's unlikely large herds or flocks are being kept on with a view to making a killing when the market value rises after rain. Only superior specimens generate really high prices and the mark-up gained on ordinary animals may not be commensurate with the costs of feeding during the drought.

Culling and selling has given farmers income to meet drought feeding costs and lessened the financial and work burden as well as the worry. This is the area where hobby farmers fall down, culling being a difficult and painful process. Conventional farmers will have started with older and broken mouthed animals or those with poor feet and mobility. Next to go would have been females that failed to get pregnant following joining or that had bad udders. These criteria apply equally to sheep or cattle. The males would have been examined and culled on age,

mobility and fitness, and whether they carried the desired production traits.

## FINDING INFORMATION

Hobby farmers tend to slip through the farming information network, but at present government farming organisations have material appropriate to professional and nonprofessional farmers. Most of it is free and can be sourced from a quick phone call or note to regional offices. Both Victoria and New South Wales have produced drought feeding/management booklets that give excellent information on the nutritional value of selected feedstuffs, explain the importance of dry matter, energy and protein and take readers through a range of feeding programs and possible consequences. Hobbyists won't find a specific regime for three spoilt sheep or a handful of cows, but they will learn of the risks of grain poisoning, the down side of survival feeding, constituents in unusual feedstuffs and tips for managing farm water supplies.

Victorians should contact the DNRE by phoning 136-186 and asking for the *Drought Feeding and Management* booklets or the *Drought Preparation and Survival Guide*, or visit [www.nre.vic.gov.au](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au) for further details. NSW has a drought hotline on 1800-814-647, or you can visit their website on [www.agric.nsw.gov.au/drought](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/drought) and look at the range of leaflets available, or their helpful booklet, *Managing*



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*Drought.* Readers in other states should approach their Department of Agriculture or Primary Industries for similar printed matter.

#### WHERE TO START?

What do you do if your pocket is hurting from paying high prices for stock feed, but you simply can't get rid of Milly, Molly and Mandy? You need to make a judgement on the animals' present condition through either visual appraisal or by weighing one or two of your animals, so you know when they drop in condition and to what degree. It's imperative your pets get enough to eat and maintain energy and basic processes, but not be filling themselves silly when feed is scarce and costly. If you let animals get thin and health problems arise, stock may not recover.

It makes sense to keep dry stock, that is, not to join the females to a male. There is no guarantee the weather will have broken by late pregnancy when feed requirements will rise greatly. You can maintain dry stock more easily and economically and join when conditions improve.

How do you know if you're feeding enough? At present you may be feeding some grain plus pellets or hay, but is it enough? Farmers use the term fat score to grade the condition of cattle, with 0 representing emaciation and 5 being fat. Details of scoring will be in drought management books, but

essentially the tail head on cattle will become prominent and the muscling more discernible as they lose weight. Sheep must be weighed because their fleece masks any physical changes.

#### FEEDING

It is easy to believe that because animals are getting hay they're okay. Quality of hay varies considerably and often oaten hay is just straw. If hay has been left in the open there will be weather damage and with round bales this could amount to 20 – 30 percent, so the nutritional value is reduced. What the stock are getting is dry matter, but not much else, and they may starve if this constitutes the whole of their diet.

It's common to talk about metabolisable energy (ME) when discussing stock feed because it forms the greatest requirement. The energy stock get from digested feed maintains body functions and contributes to meat, milk or fleece production. Requirements vary with age and role, so keeping females unjoined means their energy needs are kept low. Protein complements energy use, and if there isn't enough in the hay or feed you provide the animals can't fully utilise the energy. Protein is needed as well to aid rumen function. It is usually low in cereal hay and straw and will be low in other hays and grains in bad seasons.

So the hobby farmer has to think about the ME and protein content of feed to ensure the family's pets survive, plus a third factor as well – dry matter. This won't be an issue where hay is being fed, but when grain is given and the diet is high in starch and low in fibre, extra dry matter must be provided. Fibre enables ruminants to digest cellulose as well as assisting the production of saliva. For pet sheep that are being fed grains around 10 – 15 percent of roughage (hay) must be given and cattle need at least 17 percent in their diet.

If you have to change your feeding regime because one of the components becomes unavailable, it is better to make the switch slowly. Try and have extra supplies on hand. If feeding grain, animals can utilise it better when it's rolled or crushed. For example, triticale and lupins go straight through when fed whole. Soaking is an option

and animals derive more benefit, but care needs to be taken so palatability isn't reduced. It is easy for soaked grain to go off.

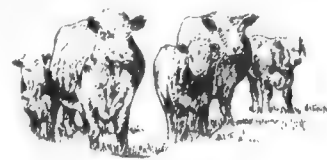
What about molasses on hay? Molasses increases energy intake, but is an expensive way of doing it. Most animals like molasses and will eat extra hay or straw when this product is poured on it, but this has to be weighed against the nutritional value and cost.

#### DON'T FORGET PARASITES

Parasites are still active during periods of drought and particularly so after falls of rain when their activity increases, so protective measures should be taken. Young animals will be the most vulnerable. Don't forget too that most animals are in poor condition by the end of a prolonged dry spell and very susceptible to parasites.

#### THE WHOLE FARM

It is easy to overlook the whole farm value of your acreage in your pursuit of feeding stock. Animals do better if contained in one area with shade and water and fed from troughs because less energy is used up. The rest of your property can recover free from the effects of sharp hooves, and dam and creek banks will be free from damage and be less inclined to erosion. The other convincing reason for locking up the rest of your farm is that any weeds introduced in feed will be limited to just one area.



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# HEALING HERBS

by Denise Horrigan, Humpty Doo, NT.

Herbal remedies are just as important today as they were centuries ago. Many remedies from bygone days have been passed down and recorded. These can be successfully used as they were long ago in the days when access to doctors and medical facilities was more limited than it is today.

We are now aware that pharmaceutical drugs, in many instances, are not needed and can have dangerous side-effects (some discovered, too late, years after they were prescribed). If you have a good supply of fresh herbs growing happily in your garden or pots, they can be used as a first-aid measure. They are most useful for natural skin care and as pest repellents. In fact, healing herbs have dozens of uses.

## MARIGOLD

Marigolds (*Calendula officinalis*) have been cultivated since ancient times. These attractive, very easily grown plants are often used for garden borders and have many healing uses.

### Skin Care

The mucilage from both flowers and leaves (freshly picked) is invaluable in the preparation of natural skin care creams and lotions. A good moisturising herbal oil for rough hands, feet and knees can easily be made at home using marigold petals. All you need is 250 millilitres of almond oil and 25 grams of marigold petals. Place the two ingredients in a resealable glass bottle and stand it in a warm sunny spot (although not too hot) for four weeks. Shake the bottle daily. After four weeks strain the petals and rebottle the oil.

Marigolds are a good addition to moisturising lotions and can also help control oily skin, pimples and spots. Gently bruise the petals and press them onto the troublesome spot for a few minutes.

### To Pamper the Feet

An infusion of marigold petals added



to a hot foot bath will refresh tired feet. Add the petals of about six flowers to a cup of boiling water and steep until cool. Strain and add the liquid to a basin of warm water. This infusion is also good for acne.

### For Bee Stings

Scrape off the sting with your thumbnail (never grasp the protruding part of the sting to withdraw because it only squeezes out more venom), then apply the fresh juice of marigold petals.

### Tagetes

Belonging to a different plant genera, but also with the common name of marigold, *Tagetes patula*, or French marigold, can be planted among your fruit trees and vegetables to repel white butterflies and moths which are pests to brassica crops. They are also said to repel cutworms and exude a substance which kills nematodes.

## FENNEL

One of the best known traditional uses of *Foeniculum vulgare* taken as a tea is that it increases the supply of milk in nursing mothers. In much earlier times it was found to still the pangs of hunger and was used as a slimming aid by the ancient Greeks and Romans. It

is also beneficial for the digestive tract, is an anti-inflammatory, a disinfectant, and is useful when suffering from colic and cramps.

To make a decoction for tired or inflamed eyes boil a handful of fennel leaves in water for 15 minutes. When cooled, dip a pad of cotton wool into this and place it over the eyes for 10 minutes.

Fennel also helps to soften the skin, combat fine lines and refine pores. Here is a recipe for a face cleanser suitable for dry skin.

- 150 ml boiling water
- 2 to 3 tbsp fennel leaves
- 150 g natural yogurt

Pour boiling water over chopped fennel leaves, allow to completely cool. Strain, then blend with the yogurt. Apply to face, leave on for a few minutes, then rinse off. This will keep, refrigerated, for up to 10 days.

## SAGE

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) has had a reputation for centuries as a cure for all ills. Planted near cabbages it will deter moths and other pests. It is also a companion plant to carrots. This herb is excellent for your skin.

For an easy-to-make facial mask, combine in a blender or food processor one peeled and chopped apple (a Granny Smith is best), two tablespoons

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pure honey and 15 grams of chopped (fresh) sage. When blended, apply evenly over your face. Leave on for 10 minutes, then rinse with warm water.

A sage tea will lower the temperature of a fever sufferer, relieve headache and tension, cleanse the blood and stimulate the digestive system and help relieve morning sickness and diarrhoea. Combined with basil, sage tea is said to calm shock victims.

An infusion of sage is an excellent antiseptic gargle for sore throats, bleeding gums and mouth ulcers. Fresh leaves rubbed on the teeth will leave them clean and sparkling and strengthen the gums.

Pleasant tasting teas can be prepared by combining sage with lemon verbena, with mint, with lemon grass or lemon balm. A tea of equal parts of sage, rosemary and peppermint leaves, taken every half-hour, is said to relieve persistent headaches.

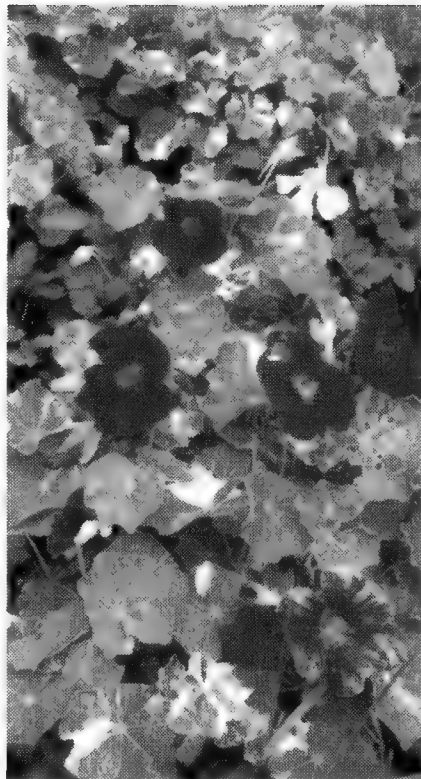
## NASTURTIIUM

Even nasturtiums, *Tropaeolum* spp, belong to the herb family. They are very easy to grow and have many medicinal and culinary uses. Their roots exude a substance which repels undesirable insects in the soil. Plant them among your cabbages and cauliflowers.

Nasturtiums are rich in vitamin C and can be infused and taken as a tonic and internal cleanser. It is an antiseptic plant and ideal to use in a hot poultice, for sores and boils. To help in the control of acne and pimples apply the bruised flowers and seeds directly to the skin.

## COMFREY

One of the most widely recognised medicinal herbs is comfrey (*Symphytum*



*officinale*). Comfrey is easy to grow and the excess leaves are a good ingredient to add to your compost heap to aid decomposition. It is also ideal for making liquid fertiliser.

Comfrey is believed to help mend broken bones, ease aches and pains, heal bruising, sprains and swelling. Comfrey ointment is available at health food stores, but you can make up your own. Slice the root of the plant finely. Place this in a hot pan and cover with lard, making sure that all the slices are covered. Allow to remain in the hot lard for some time, then strain. When cool, pour into small jars with airtight lids. Keep it cool, do not allow it to melt.

For a soothing poultice use the bruised leaves or grated fresh roots made into a mash. This is ideal for bruises, swelling, aching joints and sprains. To reduce swelling associated with fractures apply around the area of broken bone. It will soothe the inflammation as well as help the bone to heal. (Thus the old name of 'knit-bone'.)

To make a comfrey mask blend one cup of chopped comfrey (roots and leaves) and four tablespoons of boiling water in a food processor until

blended. Strain off excess water through a piece of cheesecloth. Apply to face. Leave on for 10 minutes (while relaxing, reading *Grass Roots*). Rinse off with cool water.

## TO MAKE HERB TEAS

When making tea using fresh herbs, it is most important to make the infusion in a china teapot, cup or jug, because metal can change the effectiveness and taste of the herb. Never use aluminium! The strength of the tea is your choice. Experiment with the amount of leaves used. Use around one tablespoon of fresh herbs per cup of water. Use boiling water, allow to steep for a few minutes, then strain. If you require a stronger infusion, allow to steep for at least 30 minutes before straining and bottling. An infusion will keep, refrigerated, for up to one week. ☘

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**Poultry Information  
Publishers**

PO Box 438, Seymour 3661  
Ph 03-5792-4000



## ROUND THE MARKET PLACE

We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.



### ANTI SNOR THERAPEUTIC RING

This ring is a simple drug-free way to help people who have problems with snoring. Made from sterling silver and available in four adjustable sizes, the Anti Snor Therapeutic Ring is based on the ancient technique of Chinese acupressure. The ring is worn on the little finger of the left hand

so that gentle pressure is applied to the points on the underside of the finger. The points are connected via the arterial channel through the arm to the heart, nose and throat areas, and the pressure assists in the relief of restless sleep patterns and snoring. The ring has additional benefits such as increased stamina and relief from sinusitis. Results may be noticed immediately or within two to seven days. Persistence is a must. The Anti Snor Therapeutic Ring is available from health food stores and pharmacies for \$69.95.

For more information contact Anti Snor Pty Ltd, PO Box 277, Nobby Beach 4218, ph: 07-5538-4849.

### SOLAR DRUM OVEN

This solidly constructed oven is a great way to cook and dehydrate food. It is made from recycled and low-cost building materials, is portable, easy to keep clean and has no running costs. The oven works best in direct sunlight and has a built-in adjustment for angling the heat-reflecting lid towards the sun, together with a drum that rotates in its frame to give summer and winter collection angles. Cooking times take longer than conventional methods with the oven temperature reaching around 100° C, but slower cooking times retain nutrients and ensure improved flavour. Cooking volume is about 80 litres and the oven weighs 21 kilograms. It comes with the installation option of a solar booster. The Solar Drum Oven is ideal for use when camping, in remote areas, during fire bans or as an outside kitchen to reduce temperatures in the home.

For more information contact Barefoot Engineering, Lot 26 Fraser Road, Canning Vale 6155, ph: 08-9455-1260.

### BROCCOLI SPROUTS

Just Sprouts has been growing organic, SQF-accredited sprouted products hydroponically for more than 15 years and is Victoria's largest producer. Broccoli sprouts are extremely high in the compound sulphoraphane glucosinolate (SGS), known for its ability to promote the body's cancer fighting ability, in concentrations that are 20 to 50 percent higher than that of broccoli heads. Researchers at John Hopkins University have found that SGS boosts chemoprotective enzymes that trigger antioxidant activity and can reduce the risk of developing stomach ulcers which may lead to stomach cancers. SGS may also help protect the body from liver, breast, colon and lung cancers. Broccoli sprouts are an extremely good source of iron, and are a great help with indigestion that has been medically attributed to *Helicobacter pylori*. The Just Sprouts website has a library of tasty recipes using broccoli sprouts, which are available throughout Victoria.

For more information contact Just Sprouts, 45 Lark Road, Exford 3338, ph: 03-9743-4528, or visit [www.justsprouts.com.au](http://www.justsprouts.com.au)

### PERRY'S POWER MULCH

Perry's Power Mulch is eco-friendly and has a proven formula combining neem, zeolite and agricultural microbes contained in finely mulched, specially selected organic sugar cane tops. It's a great source of nitrogen and breaks down into sweet-smelling humus. This mulch protects plants from nematodes, frost and snails while providing nutrients and special gases. Neem also attracts beneficial insects such as bees and worms. Once applied around plants and watered well, the mulch retains as much as 70 percent moisture. Perry's Power Mulch benefits all soil types. This pesticide-free fertiliser is packed into portable bales for convenience and is available from landscape suppliers and some nurseries along the east coast and some parts of Western Australia.

For more information contact Perry's Power Mulch, 51-53 Murdoch's Road, Moore Park 4670, ph: 1800-100-227, or visit [www.powermulch.com](http://www.powermulch.com)

### PAIN AWAY

This herbal spray pack comes highly recommended by arthritis sufferers. Pain Away contains a mixture of emu, rosemary and eucalyptus oils, and arnica montana. All these combine to increase the circulation of oxygenated blood which helps to relax muscles and nerves, and relieve pain associated with arthritic joints, tension headaches, migraines, spurs, burns, tendonitis, gout, back and neck pain, sports injuries and bee or wasp stings. Simply spray directly onto that part of the body experiencing pain. Where relevant, swelling is reduced, bruising brought out and fluid drained, while flexibility and joint movement can be regained. One 300-millilitre spray bottle will last for about six months and costs \$45, including postage and handling.

For more information contact R & V Marketing, PO Box 493, Ayr 4807, ph: 07-4783-1692.

### OLIVE LEAF EXTRACT

Olive Leaf Australia has now secured European and Asian export orders. It has over 350,000 olive trees planted which meet the stringent requirements of the Therapeutic Goods Administration while providing access to fresh, selected leaves, unlike some imported products which use dehydrated leaves. The use of olive leaves for medicinal purposes is not a recent development – the leaves have been used by people in the Mediterranean region for many centuries – but it is only in recent years that scientists have developed an effective method of extracting the key active ingredient, oleuropein. Trials have been conducted on this natural health supplement and the benefits include relief from upper respiratory conditions, sinusitis, colds and flu; the maintenance of normal cholesterol levels and improved energy. For more information contact Olive Products Australia, 767 Bischoffs Road, Coominya 4311, ph: 07-5424-6771, or visit [www.olea.com.au](http://www.olea.com.au)

## RECENT RELEASES

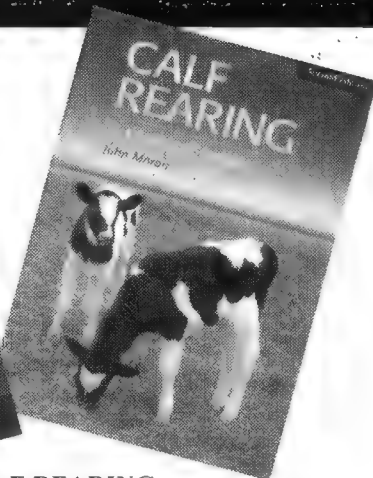
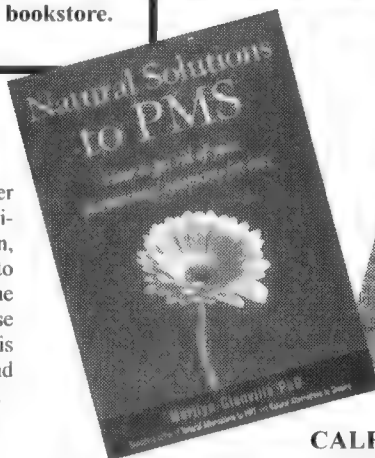
Titles described can be ordered through your nearest bookstore.

### NATURAL SOLUTIONS TO PMS

**How to Get Rid of Your Premenstrual Symptoms Forever**  
Marilyn Glenville PhD

Glenville is a nutritional therapist and this is reflected in her approach to tackling premenstrual symptoms frequently experienced by women. Sufferers are encouraged to eat little and often, and preferably foods with a low glycaemic index. This helps to maintain a balance between oestrogen and progesterone levels; the latter being reduced when excess adrenaline (caused by low glucose levels from consuming refined foods and stimulants like coffee) is in the system. Symptoms, treatment alternatives, supplements and herbs, other possible causes and available tests are also covered.

P/b, 198pp, Hodder Headline Australia, Level 22, 201 Kent Street, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-8248-0800. RRP: \$32.95.



### CALF REARING A Practical Guide

John Moran

Plenty of information on growth, nutrition, health and behaviour, as well as descriptions of various calf raising systems and facilities, are contained in this latest edition of *Calf Rearing*. Calf welfare, post weaning management and calf communication are discussed in detail. Practical economic information on feedstuffs, labour requirements and stock losses is provided to assist producers in selecting the most appropriate calf rearing system. Moran is a senior scientist with Agriculture Victoria.

P/b, 211pp, Landlinks Press, PO Box 1139, Collingwood 3066.

Ph: 03-9662-7500. RRP: \$39.95.

### LOW FAT FOODS FAST 100 Low-Fat Meals that Beat the Clock

Lee Gold

We all may be looking out for this title now we're into the New Year. It's a fast no-nonsense Australian guide to quick, healthy meals with a minimum of fats. Tips for fast cooking and healthy eating, as well as an outline of which fats are good, makes this no-frills publication down to earth and sensible. Practical but tasty recipe sections on breakfast, lunch, dinner, sweets and snacks give you plenty to ruminate over.

P/b, 156pp, Pan Macmillan, St Martins Tower, 31 Market Street, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-9285-9100. RRP: \$16.95.

### THE BOTANICAL GARDEN

Volume 1 Trees and Shrubs

Roger Phillips & Martyn Rix

This first part of a comprehensive two-volume reference work covering over 1000 genera is ideal for all those who are serious about their plant identification. As you'd expect, *The Botanical Garden* contains detailed colour photography and a very thorough text that considers both the plant development and the most recent work in DNA studies which are challenging traditional methods of plant classification.

H/b, 491pp, Pan Macmillan, Level 18, St Martins Tower, 31 Market Street, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-9285-9100. RRP: \$130.

### BATTLING BIG BUSINESS

**Countering Greenwash, Infiltration and Other Forms of Corporate Bullying**

Eveline Lubbers – Editor

Multinationals have a number of strategies they can deploy against their critics. The first part of this book discusses these tactics in detail, including those used by some major 'household-name' companies. The second part looks at tools that are often employed to confront corporations in playful, unexpected ways. Lubbers is an investigative reporter and activist living in Amsterdam, and specialises in exposing the strategies that have been used by multinationals to silence their opponents.

P/b, 224pp, Scribe Publications, PO Box 523, Carlton North 3054. Ph: 03-9349-5955. RRP: \$27.50.

### HOW INDOOR AIR QUALITY AFFECTS YOUR HEALTH

And What You Can Do About It

Manfred Kaiser

This very readable, information-packed Australian publication covers it all – asbestos, radon, combustion products, as well as chemical and biological pollutants. These chemicals and their concerning health implications are covered thoroughly, but not in an alarmist fashion, and constructive methods for improving indoor air quality are clearly outlined. Anyone concerned about family health or in the process of establishing a new home should read this book first.

P/b, 150pp, Michelle Anderson Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 6032, Chapel Street North, South Yarra 3141. Ph: 03-9826-9028.

RRP: \$19.95.

### FIERCE CONVERSATIONS

**Achieving Success at Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time**

Susan Scott

Conversations are the lifeblood of relationships and yet many people are reluctant to discuss tough issues that can lead to real change or understanding, fearing that this may end up in an emotional outburst. Scott shows us how to identify the core issues and have conversations that are passionate, truthful and that really matter. While these conversations may make us a little anxious, Scott offers tools to work through our fear and provides challenging reasons as to why we need to make the effort.

P/b, 266pp, Hodder Headline Australia, Level 22, 201 Kent Street, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-8248-0800. RRP: \$34.95.



## DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Megg Miller.

You wouldn't believe the difference a fall of rain makes, even when it's not a drought breaker. Strangers smile in the street, shopkeepers lose their pre-occupied air and a general optimism pervades the country community. Suddenly everyone can believe that the happier, easier way of life will return again after the drought breaks. Adapting to changing circumstances and making sacrifices have been shaping forces for months, and even years for some rural dwellers as nature has shown us its driest face.

Two inches fell slowly and steadily at year's end, leaving locals here with a feeling of relief and renewal. The north-east had received one or two falls in previous months but they had largely bypassed my area. This time we were the recipients and tanks were part filled and lucky dams topped up. Marcel, had he been staying at the weekend, would have been flat out all day emptying the buckets he has strategically placed under downpipes so no precious rainwater is lost. Ironically, the water tanker visited and filled my tanks that same day, about the tenth visit for the year. The tanks are not connected to roofing so couldn't benefit from the rain, but even so 4000 gallons is a big ask from one rainfall.

It's been bliss having nights off from watering the garden. I don't visit and water every night, but it's still a tie and quite exhausting when it's hot. The plants have all perked up in a way that just never occurs with the hose. I'd watered the previous evenings before the rain, as had Suni and Marcel. The kids spent their Christmas break in the country and each time I rang for a chat and asked what they were up to it was, 'Watering. Just watering . . . why do you ask?'

The silver leaved plants in my garden are making do with just one water a week, those that are well established coping very well, but the newer introductions would clearly like more water. Tough they need to be to survive, and if they don't a hardy substitute will replace them. I'm fancying some varieties of emu bush which is said to be an attractive species and hardy as hell. I've had to resort to shade cloth in the vegie garden, either draped over wire A-frames or tied to guards made from netting, and the system is working brilliantly. It reduces transplant shock and gets seedlings that are not watered every night off to a good start free from hot wind and full sun. Give me a couple of hours and a roll of shade cloth and I could have half

the garden hiding behind wire netting and shade cloth. Actually, the effect from the mix of different sized green guards is quite artistic so maybe I'm onto a new form of garden sculpture.

Some young citrus trees that were going backwards, losing leaves and looking sick have come good since I put the shade guards around them. They don't seem to need as much water now either so that's an additional bonus. I noticed Marcie has adopted this protective practice too and has a row of young trees that were on death's door now boasting new growth along with neatly fitted shade cloth covers. Roberino would approve of our recycling - we've used up lots of old lengths of wire netting.

He mightn't look so favourably on our chicken multiplication. Both Suni and I have new broods of chickens that were neither planned nor desirable. We've been remiss in not searching bushes and buildings for nests of eggs; sparring with broodies over eggs isn't appealing after watering the garden on a hot evening. During the Christmas break two of Suni's bantams brought out clutches of the sweetest, tiniest chicks imaginable. Several have since disappeared so I've been delegated to top up feed and water when the kids are busy. My chicks are gigantic, especially the baby turkeys, but they're also just as enchanting.

Little turkeys can be difficult to rear because of the ever present risk of blackhead, but a wise old turkey hen hatched nine out over two months ago and they're doing wonderfully. I'm sure the hen croaks at me, 'And no thanks to you,' because I lost a couple one night and by luck they were wandering in the paddock next morning. One little turkey had been poorly and I guessed it was probably blackhead so put some medication in the water and slippery elm powder on their food. Checking the shed at night to see how the patient was responding, my presence plus the moving beam of the torch totally spooked the young turkeys. They flew and flapped into the netting, pushing the door open, and two



Christmas day at Suni and Marcie's cosy little cottage.

escaped. I searched for ages with no success and wondered if I hadn't imagined the flight of several out the door. I was most surprised to find two escapees keeping the pig company and keen to stay at liberty. They were duly trapped and returned, but it's a mystery where they spent the night and how they evaded the fox.

Maria does put in a woof or two at night, but she's just turned 12, is deaf and has lost most of her bark so isn't the guard dog of old. A couple of birds have been taken from right under her nose and, though she's turned up for a half-hearted bark, the fox probably knows it's got the edge on her. The hot weather hasn't helped either; Maria goes on strike when it reaches 35° C. Luckily there is little ground cover around for nesting in the paddocks because any unfortunate bird desirous of laying outdoors and going broody is high tea for the fox.

What of the plans for achievements large and small over the holiday break? Suni mentioned preparing for painting when she wrote last issue and I had sanding and paint stripping to conquer. What with heat, books and chocolate not a lot got done. The plans fizzled out, though Marcie managed to keep busy while he listened to the cricket.

Father Christmas and his helpers were just too generous. Not one but half a dozen thick interesting books, and lots of chocolates to nibble in between turning pages. We celebrated our family Christmas at the kids' rural retreat, David and his partner Sylke, myself, Suni, Marcie, and this year

Sylke's son and mother. The food was top class and wine and conversation flowed so well we forgot our annual Trivial Pursuit tournament. It was fun and late when we waved Dave and co off and returned indoors to look at Santa's offerings. Suddenly the cat appeared and went troppo. Overcome by noise and extra people, poor Pablo had skulked in the bedroom, but now was full of beans. His forays into the discarded wrapping paper (so no recycling) sent us hysterical and Suni laughed so much she doused the couch and my shirt with Shiraz. Lucky the books escaped, otherwise we wouldn't have enjoyed our feast of reading.

Our lists, naturally, are growing, but thankfully we've been able to put the books away and the chocolate is long gone. It's not really the weather for vigorous activity so some jobs have to be postponed. I've had help from the high temperatures in a most unexpected way. Nasty old lino tiles that refused to budge just two months ago can be lifted now with minimum effort. The heat has softened the glue and I've been able to remove most of them. Trouble is they leave a sticky surface on the floor and if I stand still for any length of time I have to unstick myself. Thank goodness the books are all at home because I'll often read a paragraph which leads in turn to one or more chapters and I'm not the least concerned if I'm standing or sitting. Who would believe me if I apologised for being late because I had become stuck to the floor? Civilised sort of renovations wouldn't you say? ☺



One of Suni's little Japanese chicks, they're so tiny and cute.

## PENPALS

Hello, my name is Alec. I am 9 years old. I like Star Wars, Pokemon, gardening, maths, computers, and I love reading. I like to ride my bike and swim in the pool. I have just started being home schooled and would like to have friends to write to who will write to me as well, aged 10 – 12 years. Please write soon.

**Alec (GR 155),**

**C/- PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.**

Hi, my name is Liam and I am 12 years old. I have just started home schooling and I enjoy reading, all aspects of computers and computing. Also music, gardening, extreme sports and Star Wars. My favourite schooling subjects include science, language and computer studies. I live with my mother and brother; we have a cat and a chook. My letterbox eagerly awaits replies from anyone aged 10 – 16 years who wants a penpal.

**Liam (GR 155),**

**C/- PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.**

I am a 16-year-old girl who recently discovered your mag and I reckon it's pretty cool! I think all parents should involve their kids in such a positive lifestyle. I recently took up knitting so if any pros out there could give me patterns, I would be stoked. My best friend is about to have a baby and both she and I would like to hear from *Grass Roots* mums and dads who know about natural and innovative parenting. Lastly, I would love to find young people like myself who enjoy the GR lifestyle and would like to be penpals.

**Chiquita (GR 155),**

**C/- PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.**

Hello. My name is K. I'm an 18-year-old female and live in Victoria. I'm looking for penfriends aged 17+, preferably in Victoria, but anywhere else is fine too. In 2003 I'll sadly be moving to Melbourne to study creative arts. Anyone in the same boat? Please reply! I'm open minded, interesting, alternative and artistic. I love art, music, jewellery/dressmaking, reading, writing and nature. I'm not fanatically religious, racist, homophobic or biased in any way. So pick up a pen and write!

**K, PO Box 38, Neerim South 3831.**



# GRASSIFIEDS

## HOW TO ADVERTISE

Use the form provided below, or a separate sheet of paper, to print your advertisement clearly, **not in block capitals**, including correct punctuation. If you have more than one ad please print each one on a separate page. Remember to include an address or phone number in your advertisement. Count the number of words and multiply by 85 cents per word (phone number counted as one word) to work out the total cost of your advertisement. Send **with payment** to Grass Roots, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661, before the deadline and we'll include your advertisement in the next issue of Grass Roots. **Deadline for GR 156 is 25th February, 2003.** Please do not fax ads.

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## PROPERTY FOR SALE

### NEW SOUTH WALES

**MERIMBULA HINTERLAND FOREST RETREAT:** Unique property within nat pk, 20 km coast, 2 1/2 hrs snow. Forty ac, perm clean crk, adobe cottage, composting toilet, solar, studio/guest accom, dams, orchard, gardens, abundant wildlife, r/forest walk. \$165,000. Ph: 02-6494-2306.

**NAMBUCCA VALLEY,** 32 ha property, perm water, r/forest gullies, timbered hills, 1.5 ha 4 yr old flooded gum plantation, surrounded by state forest, crk frontage. Run as organic for 20 yrs. Two b/r house, set high, mountain & crk views. Designer kitchen, huge lounge & verandahs, power & ph & sep studio with power & ph. \$220,000. Ph: owner, 0411-141-453, 02-6564-4066.

**NAMBUCCA VALLEY** – Self-sufficient retreat: 100 ac at end of valley, backing onto state forest. Handcrafted, 2 b/r open plan home. Unique timber features. Balconies with r/forest views. Verandahs, c/port, underground cellar. Separate mudbrick studio, sheds & workshop. Self-sufficient with solar power & hot water, 12,000 gal water storage. Chook yards, gardens & well-developed f/trees. Deer fences on 20 ac & yards. Twenty km from Bowraville, 30 km from beaches. \$195,000. Ph: 02-6564-4019. Website: [www.austrealiarealty.com](http://www.austrealiarealty.com) Ref B 130175.

**ROCKY RIVER – TWO SMALL COTTAGES** on 2 ac, stables, studio (unfinished), surrounded by 66 ac crown land (old gold mining tunnels/shafts, overflowing sandy bottom dam/lake, pine trees & Australian bush to walk through undisturbed). University of Armidale approx 20 mins drive & township of Uralla 2 km. Potential for tea rooms/nursery or small business, popular real estate area, lately 17% real estate growth rate in this district. Further details: mobile, 0412-822-853, or 0402-424-860.

**FOREST HIDEAWAY, DRAKE, NSW:** 143 ac bordering state forest, 3 b/r shed/house with woodfire, solar power, gas appliances & composting loo. Private setting overlooking gardens, 4 dams. Caravan, ute & tractor also included. \$80,000. Ph: Clare Urquhart, 02-6737-6772, or visit: [www.alfordduff.com.au](http://www.alfordduff.com.au)

**WHIPORIE,** 153 ha, 62 km nth of Grafton. Double storey, 3 b/r, open plan kitchen & living area. Studio flat. Sheds with concrete floors. Hybrid solar/generator power. \$230,000, vendor finance to \$140,000. Ph: 02-6683-2440, avoid 6 to 10 am/pm.

Web: [www.nor.com.au/users/wbrener](http://www.nor.com.au/users/wbrener)

**KYOGLÉ SHIRE,** 100 ac of quality land. Abundant water, outstanding original farmhouse, 3-bay workshop. Private, but not isolated. \$260,000. Ph: 02-6667-1122.

**BUNNAN, WEST OF SCONE,** 2 ac, 3 b/r, sleepout, open fire, aircon, tanks, septic, spring-water we drink, great views, heaps of wildlife. \$69,500. Ph: 02-6545-4210.

**CENTRAL COAST, BENSVILLE:** Self-sufficiency on this private 2 ac permaculture property. Fruit & nut trees abound, raised brick veggie beds, yabbie ponds, chooks, paddocks & more. Country living yet mins to beaches, schools, shopping centres. North-facing slope. Brick & tile home, 4 good size b/rs, WIRs, en suite to main, Tasmanian blackwood kitchen, lge family room, open plan living area, views to lovely gardens from every window, dbl garage, workshop, \$645,000. Ph: Geoff or Maureen, Bensville agency, 02-4369-2275.

**TYALGUM, NORTHERN NSW,** six ac on approved MO. All-weather access, c/van, driveway, house pad, dam. \$35,000 ONO. Ph: 07-5524-2031.

**NORTHERN RIVERS,** 2 ac land (strata title) situated in between Byron, Qld, Mt Warning, & Lismore in the Billen Cliffs community. This property has potential, with a 5000 gal w/tank, dam, easy access and a NW aspect. It's ideal for just about anyone. Ideal for building your first home, ideal for young families or the artistically inclined, or those in search of the Oz 'laid back culture'. Ideal for fruit trees & landscaping, & ecotourism already started in hamlet. School bus in walking distance, shop 4 km, Steiner/pre/primary school nearby. Community arts & craft centre. This is a dream for nature lovers & the community spirited. Owner moved to Europe. Priced to sell fast. First to see will buy. \$32,000 ONO. Ph: Ben, 0401-165-825. Email: [rfeinsec@aol.com](mailto:rfeinsec@aol.com)

# GRASSIFIEDS

## PROPERTY FOR SALE NEW SOUTH WALES

**PRIVATE 20 ACRES** in the south-east, inland from Eden. The pick of all blocks on Letts Creek, 10 mins to magnif Wog Wog River & Nat Pk. Partly cleared & deep-ripped for tree planting. Spent 6 years & over \$60,000 on materials, earthworks, water tanks, shed, large unfinished rock house & numerous stonemasonry developments that sit on the property. Need a quick sale @ \$68,000. Ph: owner, 0418-754-696.

**NORTHERN RIVERS** – Uki – share in well-established community under company title. Solar power. Good access. Permanent water, secluded with abundance of native flora & fauna. \$109,000. Ph: 02-6679-5496.

Email: martin@norex.com.au

**FIFTY KILOMETRES SOUTH OF GRAFTON:** 83 ac tranquillity, not isolated, power, ph, large dam, wet weather crk. Lovely mud home with leadlight, extension not completed. Primary & high school bus passes block, 6 km Nymboida village, friendly neighbourhood. \$160,000. Ph: 02-6649-4192.

**PRIVATE PARADISE**, 6.57 ha, northern NSW, Mt Warning area, 2 crks, palms, hardwoods, r/forest, NE aspect, at Border Ranges Nat Pk, in well estab multiple occupancy under company title. \$88,000. Ph: Jo, 02-6679-3445.

**TOWAMBA RIVER VALLEY**, house, 230 ac, river frontage.

Website: [www.privatelistings.com.au](http://www.privatelistings.com.au) ID P11359.

**THREE-ACRE PROPERTY** in the beautiful Thora Valley near Bellingen, 120 mixed fruit & nut trees, goat shed, fenced paddock, chook-house. Huge house has been turned into 2 self-cont houses, one X 4 the other X 3 b/r. Unique opportunity for 2 families to share a self-suff lifestyle. May suit extended family or rent out one side, live in the other. Current rental for one side is \$150 p/w. Close to preschool, Steiner & public schools. \$259,000. Ph: 02-6655-8525.

## QUEENSLAND

**CAPE TRIBULATION, TROPICAL QUEENSLAND COAST:** 2 adjacent virgin blocks (5 ac total) on bitumen rd, near (walk) amenities, World Heritage listed r/forest, pristine beaches, Great Barrier Reef. \$69,000 (or \$39,000 each). Ph: 0427-100-345.

Email: ibiskai@yahoo.com.au

**MILLMERRAN**, 1 1/2 hrs Toowoomba, 22 ac, 3 b/r spacious home. Cathedral ceilings, kitchen & lounge, 2 sheds, power, gas cooking, r/water, dam, fenced house yard, school bus, bitumen rds. \$140,000. Ph: 07-4695-4184, or 0428-954-184.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify us of any change of contact details so we can redirect enquires.  
Call us on 03-5792-4000. ☺

DEADLINES: GR156 – FEBRUARY 25  
GR157 – APRIL 25

**MILLMERRAN: TWENTY ACRES** virgin land, 4 paddocks + buildings. Ph: 0417-938-019.

**MT FOX VIA INGHAM**, 87 ac, mobile home, primary school, beautiful block, some r/forest. \$95,000. Vendor finance. Exchange Cairns possible. Ph: 07-4064-2848.

**COOMINYA SIX KILOMETRES:** 54 ac, 3 b/r low-set timber home, 1 1/2 hrs to Brisbane, 1 hr to Toowoomba, 10,000 gal tank r/water storage, 4 dams, 2.5 ac cleared & fenced, good soil. Views over Lockyer Valley & Great Dividing Range. For information write to: PO Box 20, COOMINYA 4311.

**CHINCHILLA, SECLUDED, UNIQUE** 18 sq house on newly fenced 120 ac, 1/2 natural bush, the rest selectively cleared. New gas stove, kitchen, tanks, machinery shed. Solar power, 3 dams, easily maintained gardens. Rates \$254 year. School bus near, farm ute. Genuine bargain at \$89,000. Ph: 07-4669-4295.

**GREENMOUNT – QUIET VILLAGE**, no highway noise, no crime, approx 15 km Toowoomba University. Elevated cnr block with sealed rds, power, water, ph & good views to build on flat land. Short walking distance to school. Will consider repayment plan, or exchange. Full price for 2 lots on 1 title \$15,500. Ph: 0412-822-853.

**VERSATILE PROPERTY, BUSINESS:** 100 ac, 2 houses, commercial kitchen. Permanent crk, licensed dam, r/forest, nat pk. BFA certified 1991. Proven business, production lessened due unforeseen circumstances, but markets & potential remain. +Ecotourism potential & more. Details, photos visit: [www.geocities.com/jaragunsale/](http://www.geocities.com/jaragunsale/) Forced sale. Divorce. Reduced to \$325,000, but listening to ALL offers. Ph: 07-4096-5035.

Email: carmel@cyberwizards.com.au

**TWENTY MINUTES FROM CONDOMINE.** Beautiful 4 b/r home on 50 ac. Power, ph, school bus, f/trees. Dams, sheds, stable, all fenced. \$108,000. Ph: 07-4669-2155.

**URBENVILLE**, 2 hrs Brisbane, 2 hrs Byron Bay, 1/4 ac town block, all amenities. \$4000. Ph: 0405-728-897, 02-9579-1226 AH.

**AGNES WATER – 1770**, 40 ac cleared, fenced 2 dams. Large 3 – 4 b/r colonial homestead, verandahs all sides. \$35,000 of solar power, diesel generator, water pumps, 15,000 gal r/w/tanks, pool, fully self-suff, mins from beaches & nat pk. Fastest growing area in Qld, priced for quick sale. \$260,000. Ph: 07-4974-9097.

**GECKO HOUSE, DAINTREE**, nth Qld, 3 ac, 200 m from Cow Bay beach. Top of hill bordering World Heritage nat pk, virgin r/forest. Unique wooden 3 level chalet with separate bath house, 12 volt & gas, worm toilet (240V generator back-up). Gravity-fed r/water. Living in harmony with the r/forest. \$285,000. Ph: 07-3425-1486. Photos on website: [realestateguide.com.au](http://realestateguide.com.au)

**BILOELA**, clean living, 4 ac, fenced, surrounded by natural bushland, modern 2 b/r lowset home, stables, rain & bore water. Bitumen rd 15 mins to major central Qld town, power, ph. Bargain at \$89,000. Ph: 07-4995-3200, 0408-719-437.

**KILLARNEY AREA**, 155 ac, 3 b/r, adobe, yards, bore, crk, sheds. Very private. \$220,000. Ph: 07-4664-4174.

**GIN GIN AREA**, 30 ac vacant, huge water-catchment. \$28,500 ONO. M & H Bennett, 716 Coraki Rd, RUTHVEN 2480.

**CENTRAL QUEENSLAND ECO LIFESTYLE**, 45 mins sth of Gladstone, 200 ac fully fenced with 3 lge dams. Land has fertile black soil & organic certification for sml crops/fruit. The quality 3 b/r home is pole style fully serviced by new solar system. \$285,000. Ph owners: 07-4974-4279.

**MARYBOROUGH TWENTY MINUTES**, secluded 10 ac, 2 b/r house, 2 x 900 sq ft hot-houses, 2 cabins, power, ph, gas, new Solarhart hot water, 13,000 gal water tanks, bore, dam, crk, 4-bay shed, orchard, gardens, trees, peaceful. \$155,000. Ph: 07-4129-2031.

## VICTORIA

**DARGO, STUNNING** 82-ac paradise, fully independent, ecologically friendly homestead. State of the art, lge, solar power system: solar hot water, passive solar design quality home, combustion cooking/heating. Large barn with loft, estab grounds, magnif mtn views & abundant wildlife. \$348,000. View owner website: <http://www.users.bigpond.com/emeraldridge> Ph: owner, 03-5140-1227.

**SNOWY RIVER COUNTRY** – spectacular mtn scenery, heritage properties on plateau of the Snowy River ranges. Two adjoining farms to sell separately or together. First – 514 ac cleared with shade trees, fully fenced, beautifully presented. Three b/r home, garage, woolshed, 2 sets yards, ph & elec. Very good agistment, currently carrying cattle. Running crk & ample dams. \$280,000. Second – 688 ac with pioneering hut & wool shed. Fully fenced & bounded by Snowy River Nat Pk. Half grazing, half natural forest. Brumby pass to Snowy River from gate. \$220,000. All two-wheel-drive rds. Hours: 3.5 Canberra, 2.25 Pambula, 2.5 Bairnsdale. Ph: Peter, 03-5152-1800.

**TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE:** Two cottage-style homes on one property with 2 titles and water frontage. Would suit hobby farmers or B&B business. Ideally located in picturesque surroundings in Swifts Crk, halfway b/w the coast & snowfields of Mt Hotham. With an art studio, garage, 3-bay open shed & huge gazebo, set on nearly 4 ac of estab gardens. This is a unique property. \$165,000 ONO. Ph: 03-5159-4496, or for more details visit: [www.omeoregion.com.au/properties](http://www.omeoregion.com.au/properties).

All ads on these pages are accepted at the discretion of the publishers ☺

# GRASSIFIEDS

## PROPERTY FOR SALE

### VICTORIA

**SPECIAL PROPERTY** 5 km from Portland adjacent bushland reserve, 10 ac of undulating country with absolutely private house site of 16 squares, 6 sq self-cont furnished flat, glasshouse, c/port, lge indoor spa. Two ac of berries & orchard. Irrigation, infrastructure, markets estab, our ongoing expertise provided. Four lge r/water tanks (30,000 gal) & excel bore water. Large 10 m by 12 m by 4.5 m high shed. School bus route. Price \$320,000 ONO. Ph: 03-5523-2947, or 03-5523-6791.

Website: [www.dundasrealestate.com.au](http://www.dundasrealestate.com.au)

**GIPPSLAND EAST – SWIFTS CREEK**, 470 ac, natural bush secured with 'Trust for Nature', adjoins state forest, 2 dams, sml hut. \$85,000. Ph: 03-5152-2011. Photos at website: [www.bairnsdale.net/landforsale](http://www.bairnsdale.net/landforsale)

### TASMANIA

**NORTH-EAST TASMANIA**, neat 2 b/r w/board cottage. Colorbond roof, garage, toolsheds, town water. Excel gardening soil on f/hold block. Winnaleah. \$33,000. Ph: 0408-581-362, or write: S Williams, RD382, Alfred St, PIONEER 7264.

**REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THE RAT RACE**, breathe in clean air, have potential income, change your lifestyle & outlook. Located in the heart of the historic village of Kempton just 35 mins from Hobart's CBD, is this superbly restored historic property (circa 1850) offering excel accom & a variety of 'lifestyle' options. The main 2-storey building incl post office, antique shop, but the 2 rooms can be returned to the house merely by opening a couple of doors. Thirty squares of accom incl – downstairs: 3 dble b/rs, formal sitting room, second lge living room, eat-in kitchen, office, bathroom; & upstairs: a huge bed-sitting room. As an added bonus there's a separately wired fully self-cont guest bungalow. Attractive gardens with a variety of mature f/trees & shrubs, dble garage, covered BBQ area & w/shop. Offers over \$220,000 ONO. Ph: Jeff Windsor, Macquarie Real Estate, 0409-199-348. Website: [www.macreale.com.au](http://www.macreale.com.au)

**HOUSE FOR SALE**, 30 ac of natural bush at Karoola, Tas. Passive solar split level cedar pole frame. Environmentally sustainable, abundant water all year. Four b/rs & 2 lge living areas. Large decks, beautiful tranquil mtn views. \$180,000 ONO. Ph: 03-6395-4487.

**WYNWARD**. Enjoy peace and nature in a European inspired home set in a beautiful native garden. Large lounge, kitchen-diningroom, slate floors, 3 b/r, attractive bathroom, garage w/shop and rural views from the patio. Only 15mins Wynyard, and short drive to beach. \$95,000. Details ph: 03-6445-4334 after 6pm.

## PLACING AN AD?

See page 77 for details

**NORTH-WEST TASMANIA**, 9.902 ha f/hold. Half land beautiful r/forest. Organic gardens, good water supply, basalt soil. Hut, s/c/stove, wood shed, chook house. \$42,000. Ph: 03-6363-5018.

**GEORGETOWN, NORTHERN TASMANIA**, 100 ac bush block, wildlife, complete privacy, home, sea views, spring water, with own sandstone earth, reg craft business, also bush rocks, garden soil, sand, firewood, gravel. \$220,000 ONO. Ph: Robin, 0408-028-344.

**HUON JUDBURY**, 10.45 ha, E, N, W sun, 180° SW mtn views, 350 m altitude, fog free, 2 ac possum-proof organic, self-suff garden. Small neat house, council approved, unfinished, bush block, 5 ac cleared, dam, best house site undeveloped, good neighbours. \$85,000. Ph: 03-6266-6389.

**ABERDEEN, 10 MINUTES DEVONPORT**, 4 ac, lovely & private, 1/4 cleared, 1/4 bush, crk, Manferns, fully fenced. \$35,000. Ph: 03-6425-5944.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**TWO ACRES FULLY FENCED** with 288 sqm workshop with fully serviced living quarters attached. Also a garage & store shed. Situated at Coorabie, 17 km from sea. Ph: 08-8625-6165.

## FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

**SEEKING NONVEGETARIAN** for housekeeping & organic gardening in Christian household, in return for free lodging, meals & sml wage. Central Qld. Ph: 07-4995-3146 AH. Or mail application to: Greg, PO Box 585, BILOELA 4715.

**LIVE-IN PERSON/COUPLE WANTED** on my 20 ac property in your own caravan, in exchange for labour. Located 5 mins from Daylesford. Ph: 03-5348-4284.

**TASMANIA, BRUNY ISLAND**. We are looking for a caretaker (small rent) for our 90 ac waterfront property on Bruny Island from March 2003. Beautiful new solar home, garden & animals. Ten mins drive, school, shop & nursing centre, 1 1/2 hrs to Hobart. Ph: 03-6223-5515.

Email: [mhumair@southcom.com.au](mailto:mhumair@southcom.com.au)

**ROCKY RIVER NSW** long term, particulars write: Box 1002, ARMIDALE 2350.

## NO ENDORSEMENT

Grassifieds are accepted in good faith, however, Grass Roots Publishing P/L does not necessarily endorse products and services advertised herein.

**BEAUTIFUL SECLUDED PROPERTY**, 40 ac backing state forest, Clunes area Vic. Two-b/r house, solar power, share property, mature person or couple preferred. Ph: 03-9740-0020.

**RENOVATING STONE COTTAGE** in organic apple & hazelnut orchards at Marengo (4000 ft/1200 m). Dorriggo 50 km downhill & east. Rent neg. May suit artist or single parent willing to love farm life. Ph: Tony, 02-6657-6116.

**LIFE AFFIRMING MALE**, re-establishing on former farm (24 ac). A special place, mtns, lovely garden. Seeks to share with person into growing food, gardening, maintenance, etc. I welcome interest from gay men, students of permaculture etc & life. Open to exchange, reduced rent. On WWOOF, LETS, 1/2 hr Bega, 5 km Bemboka. Ph: Robert, 02-6493-0245.

**HOUSESITTER REQUIRED** Mar/Apr/May/June 2003. Neat cottage, estab gardens, etc, 20 mins to town, very peaceful & quiet. Dubbo area. Write: 'Armami', PO Box 2110, DUBBO 2830.

## COMMUNITY/SHARES

**WANTING TO START CHRISTIAN-BASED** community with old-fashioned values. PO Box 2001, KEMPSEY 2440.

**TEN KILOMETRES NORTH OF NIMBIN**, one share. \$25,000. Phone for details – 02-4573-2872.

**SPACIOUS MULTILEVEL SOLAR PASSIVE FAMILY HOME**, 5 b/r, huge verandahs, lge shed/workshop, treehouse, sandpit, landscaped organic & native gardens on 1/2 ac f/hold. Part of Freestone Hill, an intentional community on the edge of Warwick. Active permaculture community garden. Walk to private schools, less than 2 hrs Brisbane. \$150,000. Ph: 07-4661-7008, 07-4683-6226, 0438-617-008.

**SUNSHINE COAST RAINFOREST RETREAT**. Stone cottage, 5 ac share, 320 ac/23 divisions. Solar power, gas, amenities, septic, 18,000 gal w/tank, 2 crks, orchard. Company title. \$120,000. Ph: 07-5472-8158.

## PROPERTY WANTED

**EX-BEEFIE** seeks about 200+ ac. Cattle country, preferably SW Vic. Will even consider rough out-paddock. Ph: George, 03-5232-2289.

**FAR SOUTH COAST, NSW**, sml bush acreage, with or w/out dwelling. \$10,000 up front, balance vendor finance. Ph: 0402-557-331, or 02-4886-4551.

**DO YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE A CUTE LITTLE COTTAGE** on 2 – 10 ac with crk, dam etc, an hr or so from Melbourne, which you would consider selling to a quiet living, nature loving person? If so, please ph: 0411-360-836.

## FOR SALE

**GRASS ROOTS 'EARLY YEARS' – 106**, incl Bumper Book, Earth Builder's Companion, 5 binders. \$330 + freight. Ph: 03-6229-8037.

# GRASSIFIEDS

## FOR SALE

**'GRASS ROOTS' COMPLETE COLLECTION** to issue 154. Duplicates issues 1, 21, 30, 31. No separation. Offers over \$500 + freight. Ph: 07-3343-9601.

**SOLAR COOKER**, new, \$295, Sydney. Ph: 02-9967-2082.

**LEYLAND DOUBLE DECKER BUS** 1957, rebuilt engine & brakes. Queen and double b/s upstairs, kitchen & lounge downstairs, 12' x 9' annexe, plus 8' x 9' awning. \$18,000. Ph: 0412-746-914.

**FOWLERS BOTTLING EQUIPMENT:** Steriliser; thermometer (new); book; dozens of bottles, s/steel lids, clips. Good condition. Euroa area. \$100 the lot. Ph: Rodney, 0417-569-411.

**GENERATOR, HATZ DIESEL** 2.7 KVA, recoil start. Never used, still in crate. Must sell, moving interstate. \$3000. Ph: 03-9687-5962.

**CARAVAN**, 21' Millard, weatherproof, perfect for bush block or as spare room. Stove, fridge, sink. \$2500. Ph: 03-9687-5962.

**'GRASS ROOTS'** magazines, issues 1 - 116. \$450 incl postage. Ph: 03-5480-7979.

**MICE TRAPS**, Row-ee multi-catch \$20, \$5 postage covers one or more. Harry Rowe, 79 Reddall St, LAKE ILLAWARRA 2528. Ph: 02-4296-1129.

## OPPORTUNITIES

**SEEKING PEOPLE** interested in a 'harmonic' (resonance & reflecting the purity of the land) lifestyle. Have 2 small acreages of interest that are ready to go - just need motivated people & input. We will set up 'harmonic' infrastructure that supports & enhances the land. HLT (Harmonic Living Trust) is aiming to restore the natural balance & ambience of the land, & harmonious relationships between ALL things. Ph: Nina, 07-5494-4836.

**DO YOU WANT TO CREATE** an environmentally sound paradise? I have the house & land, but need your permaculture/organic skills. Free accom, share expenses, possible partnership. Details to: 'On the Wallaby', PO Box 179, CHARLTON 3525.

**FREE BOARD & ACCOMMODATION** with allowance for mature female to help with three young children (& arrival of one more) in Ormeo, east Vic. Must be nonsmoker, driver's licence essential (nondrinker preferred). Duties will be light household work & some meal preparation. Must be able to cope with isolation & living in quiet country town. Minimum stay 2 months - immediate start. Ph: 03-5159-1312 for more info.

## WANTED TO RENT/CARE-TAKE

**RINGWOOD/WARRANDYTE AREA**, house/bungalow required in 2003. For Steiner student. Will rent or do caretaking, organic gardening. For self, or with 2 other students. Ph: 03-9789-4277.

DEADLINES: GR156 - FEBRUARY 25  
GR157 - APRIL 25

**HOUSESITTER AVAILABLE FROM FEBRUARY.** Mature age, n/s, n/d, loves gardens, animals. NSW or Vic. Refs avail. Ph: 02-6336-5363.

## PUBLICATIONS

**'THE BEST BREAD YOU BAKE YOURSELF'**, step-by-step manual with many alternative recipes. Now special \$25 + p&h \$6. Send chq or money order to: LSA Healing & Publishing, PO Box 176, JIMBOOMBA 4280.

**HOMESCHOOLING?** The book, *A Steiner Homeschool?* contains advice on creativity, bureaucracy, discipline, programming, curriculum, and more. Send \$14 (Visa/Mast, cheque, money order) to: Alan Whitehead, Box 329, BLACKHEATH 2785.

[www.users.bigpond.com/goldenbeetlebooks/](http://www.users.bigpond.com/goldenbeetlebooks/)

**'THE CHEMICAL MAZE'** 2nd edition is now avail. Subtitled *Your Guide to Food Additives and Cosmetic Ingredients*, this 184 page shopping guide is a must for those committed to living a healthy life. This edition also contains info on genetic engineering, hidden additives, tips on doing your own research & much more. To obtain your copy visit your local health food store or bookshop, or ph: 0402-234-954.

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**HOME EDUCATION**, for info send SAE to: Alternative Education Resource Group, PO Box 461, DAYLESFORD 3460.

**BOOKS, NEW AND OLD.** Australiana, lifestyle, Pacific, biography, horticulture, gardening, outdoors. Lists avail. BA & JM Wallace, Box 325, PORTLAND 3305.

**'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE'**, is a co-operatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin and other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestyles & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 issues for \$20, sample \$3.50. Back copies 5 for \$12 posted. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify us of any change of contact details so we can redirect enquires. Call us on 03-5792-4000. ☺

**'NATIVE STINGLESS BEES'** for profit or pleasure - how to get started, pollination/honey potential in Queensland. Detailed info booklets, packed with photographs, diagrams. For free catalogue, send name, address & 45c stamp to: ANBRC, Box 74-G4, NORTH RICHMOND 2754.

**'NEW VEGETARIAN & NATURAL HEALTH'**, the magazine of the Natural Health & Vegetarian Societies. Subscribe today, \$30 yearly and receive: 4 vital magazines, discounts at participating health food stores & natural therapies practitioners listed in magazine. Head Office, 28/541 High St, PENRITH, NSW 2750. Ph: 02-4721-5068.

**'TAGASASTE, TREE LUCERNE,** 'High Production Fodder Crop.' We've just rediscovered some copies of this useful publication. Ideal fodder to supplement grazing & help bring stock through drought. Every landowner should know about this multi-use plant. Special price \$12 posted from: Grass Roots Publishing, PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661. Ph: 03-5792-4000. Be quick, limited stock.

## FOOD & KITCHEN

**WHEATGRASS/FRUIT JUICERS** (electric) new \$449\*. Save \$\$\$\$. Same features as Samson juicers. Special offer, free delivery within Australia. (\*limited offer) Ph: 08-8293-4943 BH, or 08-8376-3460 AH.

**JUICERS, FOOD DRIERS**, water purifiers. Ph: 03-9826-3883.

**QUALITY GRAINMILL AND JUICER PRODUCTS**, manual & electric, ph: 02-4751-2477. Web: [www.jucers.com](http://www.jucers.com)

**HOME STONE FLOUR MILLS** - mill your own stoneground wholemeal flour for cakes and bread at home with a Retsel Little Ark stone flour mill. Endorsed by Housewives Association. Write for catalogue to: Retsel Distributors, PO Box 712, DANDENONG 3175, end 3 postage stamps. Ph: 03-9795-2725. Distributor enquiries welcome. Website: [www.retsel.com.au](http://www.retsel.com.au)

**STONE GROUND FLOUR** in-home, with a SCHNITZER German quality hand or electric stone mill, 6 models from \$178. SCHNITZER MILLS, 420 Freemantle Rd, Bathurst 2795. Ph: 02-6336-9100, [www.schnitzer.com.au](http://www.schnitzer.com.au)

## MISCELLANEOUS

**TEEPEES, VIKING TENTS**, medieval tents, swags, buckskin clothing. Seventeen years experience. BOJO PRODUCTS, PO Box 112, AVENEL 3664. Ph: 0412-368-034, 03-5796-2753 AH. Email: [bojo\\_products@hotmail.com](mailto:bojo_products@hotmail.com) Website: [www.frojel.com/members/bojo](http://www.frojel.com/members/bojo)

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# GRASSIFIEDS

## MISCELLANEOUS

**HEMP BED LINEN.** Ph: 03-9826-3883.

**HOW TO MAKE MONEY** selling & making chess pieces, bird baths, fine art, gnomes etc. Plaster and/or cement moulds. For methods & catalogue send \$14.95 to: Williams Imports, PO Box 989, SOUTHPORT 4215 (06/50 Railway St). Ph/fax: 07-5532-9050. Website: [www.supermoulds.com.au](http://www.supermoulds.com.au)

## COURSES

**CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS:** Aromatherapy Dip, Vitamin & Nutrition Therapy Dip, Animal Therapies (The Green Vet), Herbal Therapies, Folk Medicine, Psychic Healing, Celtic Wicca, Psychic Development. Free brochure from: Wiccan Home Studies (Estab 25 yrs), PO Box 138, SURRY HILLS 2010. Ph: 02-9319-6166. Email: [owlhome@ozemail.com.au](mailto:owlhome@ozemail.com.au)

**PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSES** with Rick & Naomi Coleman, Southern Cross Permaculture Institute. Next course Easter: April 18 - May 3, 2003. Call Naomi: 03-5664-3301 for info or email: [scpi@tpg.com.au](mailto:scpi@tpg.com.au) website: [www.southerncrosspermaculture.com.au](http://www.southerncrosspermaculture.com.au)

**CORRESPONDENCE COURSES:** Aromatherapy Dip, Vitamin-Nutrition Dip, herbs, animal therapies (the Green Vet), folk medicine, psychic healing, Celtic, wicca, psychic self-development. Free brochure, ph: 02-9319-6166, or write: PO Box 138, SURRY HILLS, NSW 2010.

Email: [chrysalis@powerup.com.au](mailto:chrysalis@powerup.com.au)

## GARDEN & ORCHARD

**COMPANION PLANTING CHART:** over 90 vegetables, herbs and fruits, including plants as insect repellents. Sow When Chart: Suggested sowing times for 100 vegetables, herbs and flowers. Mail order \$7 each + \$3 p&p. Plum Products (G), PO Box 120, Wards Rd, TAMBO UPPER, 3885.

**BAMBOO PLANTS,** lge range, best prices. Ph: 07-4129-4470, fax: 07-4129-0130.

**RAINFOREST SEED COLLECTORS** national link-up. Buy and sell local seed. Our newsletter has lots to offer. Local seed grows better and doesn't pollute your gene pool. Quarterly newsletter subs \$20, concession \$10. Offer local seed - free subs. RSC, Private Mail Bag, BELLINGEN 2454. Ph: 02-6655-2233.

## PLACING AN AD?

See page 77 for details

## SERVICES OFFERED

**FUEL AND COMBUSTION STOVES,** also heaters & flues. Repaired, installed. Ph: 02-4933-4179.

**RONITA, INDIAN CLAIRVOYANT,** \$35 for 15 mins (credit cards). Ph: 03-5176-2521, or 1902-213-221 from 11am - 8pm. Online secure payments. Website: [www.ronitapsychic.com](http://www.ronitapsychic.com)

**HOME PLANS.** *The Earth Builders Plan Catalogue* (180 pages), includes: 92 plans for handcrafted buildings (83 homes & 9 workshops, cabins & carport) of mudbrick, rammed earth, stone, poleframe, timber, poured earth, strawbale, construction details; a working drawing of a small loft floor home (11 x A3 sheets) is included. Mail \$95 (post & pack incl) to John Barton - Building Design, 89 Camden Road, NEWTOWN, Vic 3220. Enquiries to 03-5222-5774 for fixed quote to draw & document your home plan. Cheques, Mastercard, Bankcard, Visa accepted. Free brochure available by snail mail. Website: [jbdesign.4w4.net](http://jbdesign.4w4.net) Email: [jbarton@pipeline.com.au](mailto:jbarton@pipeline.com.au)

## HOLIDAYS

**NORTHERN NSW,** cabin, caravans, tipi in community. Ph: 02-6633-7037.

Website: [www.nimbinaustralia.com/sundara](http://www.nimbinaustralia.com/sundara)

**MORUYA - FAR SOUTH COAST NSW,** bush cabins, romantic 1 b/r & family 2 b/rs. Big open fires. Horses, dogs welcome by arrangement. \$350 pw, \$140 per w/end. Ph: 02-4474-2542.

**LAMINGTON GLEN RAINFOREST RETREAT,** secluded self-contained cabin, visit our award winning gardens, slab hut set in nature rainforest surrounding. Ph/fax: 07-5544-8166.

**FINCH HATTON GORGE,** Eungella Nat Pk Qld. Platypus bush camp, camping & tree huts, great walking area, the alternative holiday. Ph: 07-4958-3204. Website: [www.bushcamp.net](http://www.bushcamp.net)

## HANDCRAFTS

**SHERIDAN SPINNING WHEEL** and accessories, fair condition, one minor repair needed. Fleeces thrown in. \$50. Euroa area. Ph: Rodney, 0417-569-411.

**COLOURED CORRIEDALE TYPE FLEECES** for the discriminating hand-spinner. Good quality, clean, chemical free, variegated colours. \$17 kg + postage. Also tanned coloured skins avail. POA. Contact: 02-6021-2152, or 02-6036-8167.

Email: [jseat@dragnet.com.au](mailto:jseat@dragnet.com.au)

**STRANDED COTTON BUNDLES,** 100 x 8 m skeins, 50 colours - \$22 post free. Big bundles stranded cotton, 230 colours - \$50 post free. Weaving reeds, 8 - 15 dents. Send 45 c stamp for list. ARTY & CRAFTY, PO Box 40, DAW PARK, SA 5041. Ph: 08-8277-3763, fax: 08-8277-9402.

**BEADS BEADS BEADS** - unique selections of handmade glass, metal & wooden beads. Also findings, threads & kits avail. Catalogue is \$10 with samples. Please send payment to: Tsunami, PO Box 129, WALPOLE 6398.

## CLUBS

**NATIONAL ALLERGY ASSOCIATION** of Australia (NAAA) and ECO-CHOICE (our mail-order store). Enquiries; information; clinics; membership & catalogue. Contact NAAA, PO Box 48, HARRIS PARK, NSW 2150. Ph: 0415-928-028. Email: [naaaauz@yahoo.com](mailto:naaaauz@yahoo.com).

## WANTED

**MH-194 SDAs** to start/settle in the waste places. PO Box 2001, KEMPSEY 2440.

## CALENDER EVENTS

**SUSTAINABLE LIVING FESTIVAL - BUS TRIP.** Will be held at Federation Square highlighting 'the way we live' on Saturday 21 Feb. Departing Euroa 8am, return arriving Euroa 7pm. Cost TBA. For more details call Euroa Community Education Centre, 03-5795-2777. Email: [socrates@mcmedia.com.au](mailto:socrates@mcmedia.com.au)

**YARRA VALLEY EXPO.** The 7th annual Yarra Valley Expo will be held on 8 & 9 March this year, back at the Yarra Glen Racecourse. 'Farming & Living Sustainably' is the focus of the Expo, & diversity is the key to its popular appeal to each member of the family. Features this year include strawbale building, farm fencing, trellising, pruning and grafting demos. For full details ph: 03-9730-1722, or visit the Expo website at: [www.yarra-valley-expo.com.au](http://www.yarra-valley-expo.com.au)

## ATTENTION GRASSIFIED ADVERTISERS

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- Get ads in early so we have time to contact you to clarify any questions which may arise.
- Neat printing is essential so we can print your ad correctly. ☺

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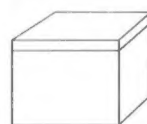


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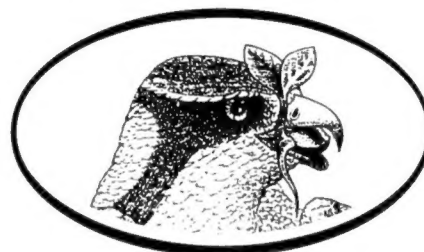
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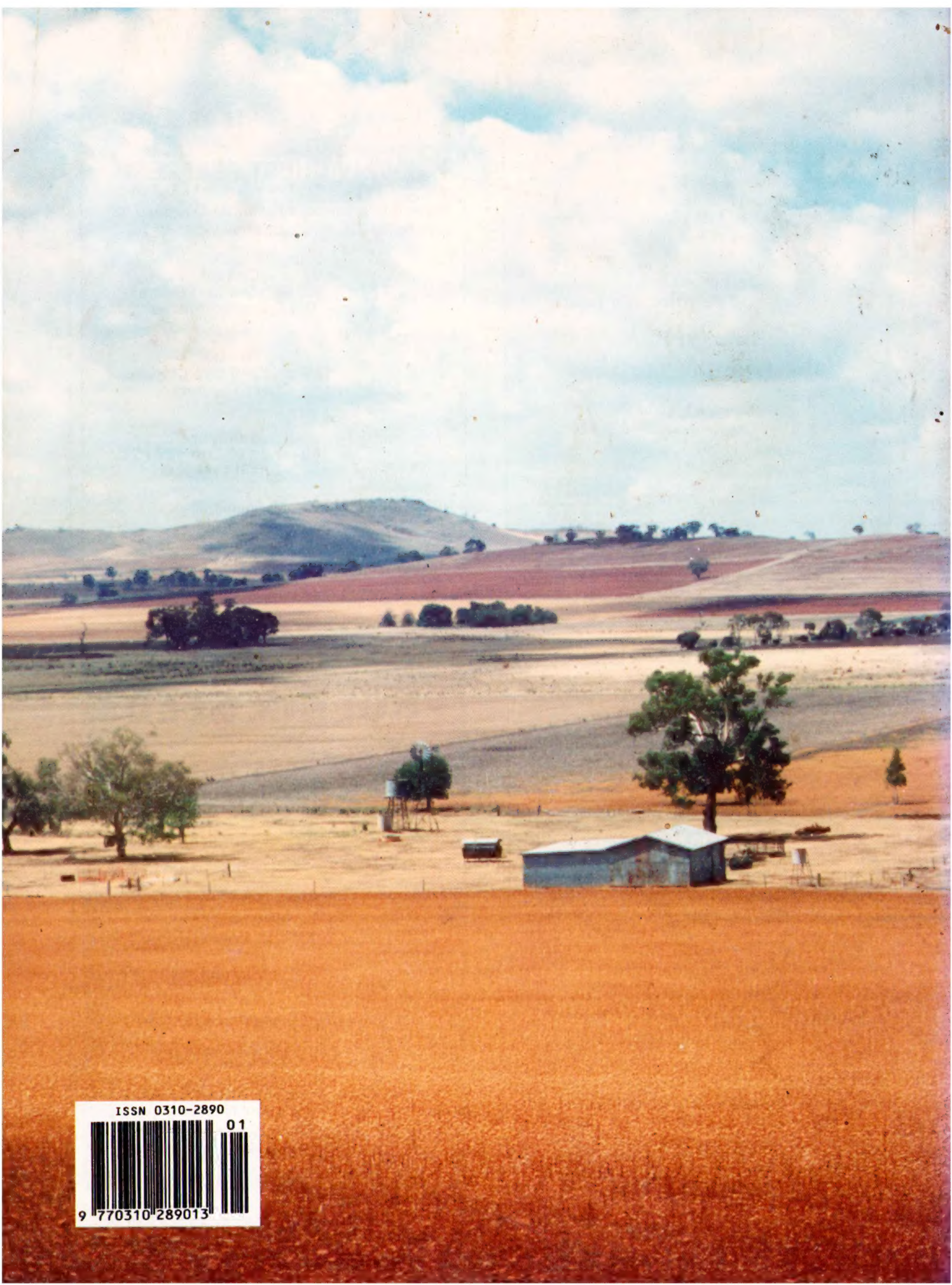
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